THE LONG KISS GOODNIGHT

by

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A WINDOWPANE

Assaulted from without by SNOWFLAKES. Wind tossed.

INSIDE

A bed, dappled with moon shadow.

A LITTLE GIRL, fast asleep. The wind whistles and sighs outside.

She DREAMS. Eyelids closed, eyes roving beneath.

A nightmare. Her eyes LEAP open. A stifled cry. She thrashes for her STUFFED BEAR as a soft voice says:

VOICE
Shhhhh.

And there's MOM, kneeling beside her. Vague shape in the dimness. The full moon throws light across one sparkling eye.

LITTLE GIRL
Mommy, the men on the mountain..!

MOM
Shhhh. Gone, all gone now.
(strokes her hair)
I'm here. Mommy's always here and no one can ever hurt you. Safe now... safe and warm... snug as a bug in a rug.
(beat)
I'll sit with you, think you can sleep?

LITTLE GIRL
Turn on the nightlight.

The mother nods. Passes her left hand gently over the girl's forehead.

MOM
Close your eyes now. I love you.

The child subsides, breathing steady. Eyes closed.

The mother rises. Regards her through the dimness. Slowly turns. Heads for the door.

Flicks on a Winnie the Pooh NIGHTLIGHT --

Her entire right forearm is slicked with blood.

More blood on her Czech-made MP-5 machine gun.

She staggers just a little... barely noticeable. Passes out of the light. Into darkness.

Sits beside her daughter's bed.

The child sleeps peacefully. Outside snow slithers at the glass.

FADE OUT.

Pause. Blackness.

FADE IN:

It's SNOWING in southwestern Ohio. Before us, nestled in the rolling hills: a postcard slice of suburbia.

SUPER the legend:

UPPER SANDUSKY, OHIO

Three Weeks Earlier

Peaceful. Serene. It's the town in the glass bubble, the one God shakes to watch it snow...

During most of the following events, God is elsewhere.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

CHILDREN, dozens of them, bursting from houses. Slapping of screen doors. Hoots and hollers.

A HORSE-DRIVEN SLEIGH is rattling down Main Street. Flanked by kids. Christmas carols, droning from loudspeakers as

HAPPY, LAUGHING SANTA

Waves howdy, chortling his "Ho's" in groups of three, meanwhile it's ten below and he's freezing his nuts off.

Santa is actually a grizzled old fire marshall named EARL.

Beside him sits MRS. CLAUS, about whom we notice two things:

First, she's the June in this June/December pair --

And second, she's to kill for. An effortlessly beautiful woman. For the record, meet SAMANTHA CAINE.

SAMANTHA
How you holdin' up?

EARL
Freezing my nuts off.

Santa produces a bottle of Seagrams. Starts to open it.

SAMANTHA
Put that away.

Earl complies, grumbling. Some teenage burnouts howl from a street corner:

Ow! Mrs. Claus is HOT!

Samantha squirms in her seat, scowling.

SAMANTHA
I can't take it, Earl, this dumb costume is wedged up my crack. It's driving me crazy. But there's these *kids* here --

EARL
Right, you don't wanna go rootin' in your butt --

SAMANTHA
In front of little Billy, age four, yeah. "Mommy, why is Mrs. Claus fingering her perineum?"

EARL
"Fingering her perineum." This is little Billy talking?

SAMANTHA
Age four, kid's unbelievable.

She waves, tosses handfuls of candy to the throng.

SAMANTHA
Ho, Ho, Ho, my costume's up my butt.
(rubs tired eyes)
I'm too old for this, you know it?

EARL
Spare me, I got a prostate the size of a fucking melon.

Samantha stares at him.

EARL
Seriously, half my life's a doctor's hand up my ass, I should marry the fucker.

SAMANTHA
Say that a little louder, there's a kid in back didn't catch it.

EARL
It's not that fucking little Billy again, is it?

SERIES OF SHOTS - MONTAGE - DAY

Throughout the following NARRATED TEXT, we catch glimpses of Samantha's daily life: 1.) Teaching third grade 2.) Rallying the sixth grade CHEERLEADERS 3.) Talking with her PSYCHIATRIST 4.) Probing at a tiny ridged SCAR under her hairline.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Eight years. I keep hiring detectives, but they never find anything.
(beat)
I was born 3000 days ago on the beach in New Jersey. I entered the world fully grown, wearing a Gap shirt and designer jeans. I don't remember buying them.
(beat)
I know a few little things. I'm allergic to penicillin. I love pie. I think I made a lot of money once, but I can't remember where I put it.
(beat)
I stand naked in front of the mirror and try to guess how old I am. I look thirty-five. Maybe older. I have lots of scars.
(beat)
Hal's the guy married me. People tell me I could do better. What's better?

EXT. SNOWY SUBURBAN STREET - AFTERNOON

Samantha walks with HAL. Late thirties, fragile-looking. Balding. They are coming out of the First Methodist Church.

SAMANTHA
Hal, I gotta tell you, of all the Christmas pageants I've seen, this was by far the most recent.

HAL
Don't even start, Sam. I had teenage girls playing the wise men, what'd you expect?

SAMANTHA
Teenage boys?

HAL
I tried, believe me. The hell with you, I thought the show was great.

SAMANTHA
Just great? Come on, it was ground breaking stuff. The first Nativity where Joseph stares at the wise mens' tits all night.

At that moment, an eight year-old GIRL comes running up.

SAMANTHA
Hey, you!

The kid leaps into her arms, as we HEAR:

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Her name is Caitlin. She's my daughter and when I woke up on that New Jersey Beach, she was two months grown in my belly. I don't know who put her there. I may never. I just know she's mine, and she's about to turn eight.

The family troops up the driveway to their SUBURBAN HOME.

Chipper little A-frame. A dog barks in the yard. Above him a TREEHOUSE perches in a big oak. Christmas lights abound.

INT. SAMANTHA CAINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

PARTY in progress. Laughter. Mingling. Samantha's daughter CAITLIN puts pipe cleaner antlers on the dog.

SAMANTHA plays hostess. She's radiant.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
I'm 3000 days old. I teach now, third grade history. Except for my name, all memory of my prior life is gone. Maybe I was a princess. Maybe I was a crackhead. Probably I was a miserable bitch who put cartoons on the fridge with little magnets.
(beat)
Was I in love ever..? Did someone look in my eyes, did I say, "Darling, I'll never forget you..?"
(beat)
Because fuck me, darling, I managed.

INT. CAITLIN'S TREE HOUSE - NIGHTTIME

Overlooks the porch from the big oak. PARTY noise from down below, wafting... as little CAITLIN hangs with two young girls. Plays with a plush TEDDY BEAR.

CAITLIN
His name is Mr. Perkins, my Mom named him for me.

A VOICE calls up from below:

SAMANTHA
Caitlin! Come help in the kitchen!

Girl #1 whispers excitedly:

GIRL #1
That's her?

Caitlin nods. Kid #2:

GIRL #2
That's who?

GIRL #1
(excitedly)
Her Mom, she's got amnesia.

GIRL #2
Swear?

CAITLIN
Swear.

GIRL #2
Too weird.

A voice interrupts their reverie:

SAMANTHA
Today, Caitlin.

The girls whirl around, startled -- Samantha's head is poking through the trapdoor.

Busted. She smiles amiably:

SAMANTHA
Hello, girls. Caitlin, come help in the kitchen.
(beat)
Hurry up, I forget where it is.

The girls look at her like she's grown a tail.

SAMANTHA
Kidding.

CUT TO:

A DOOR KICKED OPEN, WHAM-! Splintered. Lock shattered.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - AKRON, OHIO - NIGHT

A NUDE COUPLE on the bed. They look up, startled --

AS THREE COP-LIKE MEN burst through the door.

The leader is young. Thirty-two, maybe. Meet MITCH HENESSY, private investigator and con man extraordinaire. He flashes a phony badge:

YOUNG MAN
POLICE. DON'T MOVE.

MAN ON BED
What the hell is this..?!!

YOUNG MAN
Don't give me an attitude, sir. You're assuming I won't shoot your sorry ass, and everyone knows when you make an assumption, you make an ass out of u and mption. I'm Sergeant Madigan, Vice, and if you cop a 'tude, jerkoff, I will see to it you spend the next ten years in prison getting ass-fucked, and if the case is thrown out because my arrest is too violent, then I will personally HIRE men to ass-fuck you for ten years. So if you're an ass-fucking fan, go ahead and mouth off, but meanwhile you're under arrest for the crime of prostitution, now shut the fuck up before I cut out your kneecaps and use 'em as ashtrays.
(beat)
Officer Donleavy, read him his rights.

Donleavy looks pale, pasty. He stutters a few words. Loses interest. Wanders away across the room.

MAN ON BED
(a trifle confused)
Please, this is my first, I... I've never done this before, I'll do anything..!

YOUNG MAN
Sir, listen to me. I understand you're not a wealthy man, but in light of the damage this arrest will cause you, we might be able to make an arrangement --

Donleavy plops in a chair. Belches. Grins foolishly. The man in bed points to him:

MAN IN BED
Is he all right..?

THE REMAINING COP

Is swaying on his feet. Like a tree in a hurricane.

Donleavy pukes all over the floor. We CUT TO:

INT. BARREN GREY OFFICE - NIGHT

THERE'S THE GIRL. The one in bed moments ago. Filing her nails with unheard of energy while Henessey divides a wad of bills.

GIRL
We gotta stop using homeless people.

MITCH
(lights a smoke)
Forget it. They looked like cops. We pulled it off, didn't we?

GIRL
It was embarassing.

MITCH
You want I should hire actors, for Chrissake? These homeless guys are cheap, they work for food.

GIRL
Uh-huh. So when they puke all over you is that, like, a refund?

MITCH
Trin, I'm pissin' myself over here, you're so funny. What's this?

He indicates an envelope earmarked for him. Labeled in magic marker: AMNESIA CHICK.

TRIN
We got a bite on the Caine woman's picture. Guy said he rented to her back in '87. Tore the place down in '93, put everything in storage.

She goes back to filing her nails. She's passt the quick, bone is showing. Henessey opens the envelope. Extracts a street address for U-Stor-It Rentals, along with a PHOTO OF SAMANTHA.

TRIN
Wasn't there a lady on TV named Samantha? Had a magic nose or something.

HENESSEY
Bewitched, yeah. Good show. Chick lived with a faggy guy, then in the last season it was a different faggy guy.

He stares at the photo, mesmerized.

HENESSEY
All right, Trin, get on the horn to this lady. Tell her in 1967 she promised to give me a blow job. Worth a try.

EXT. SAMANTHA CAINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

SAMANTHA and HAL bid goodnight to their guests. Hal steers her away from a drunk middle-aged man.

HAL
Christ, guy's all over you like a cheap suit.

SAMANTHA
That's funny, there's a cheap suit all over him like a cheap suit.

She breathes deeply of the chill night air. Smiling. Surveys their house... their friends. Sighs:

SAMANTHA
This is all I ever wanted.

HAL
How would you know?

She blinks. The smile vanishes.

That's when she notices EARL sitting in the bushes by the side of the house. He is wearing the dog's antlers.

SAMANTHA
Someone's gotta take your father home.

HAL
You're elected. I'm plowed.
(hands her the keys)
If he tries to fuck you, don't do it.

SAMANTHA
Thanks for the tip.

ESTABLISHING SHOT - STATE PRISON - OHIO - NIGHTTIME

Switch gears: A grim, grey building. Guarded. Patrolled.

INT. PRISON - TELEVISION VIEWING ROOM - EVENING

A tired TELEVISION drones to an audience of one.
Let's call him BARNES.

Big guy, broad of shoulder. One cold eye. The other is gone, replaced by a PATCH.

He smokes cigarettes. Stubs them out on the chair's armrest. Throws offhand glances at the TV screen.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON T.V.)
... So much for the flame-swallowing Santa of Boone County. Meanwhile, KTVA news journeyed to Upper Sandusky, where Santa's own Mrs.Kringle turned out to celebrate her hubby's worldwide tour. After one look at her, I'm thinking Santa got what he wanted this Christmas.

The happy news chatter continues. Barnes isn't listening. Barnes isn't talking or breathing either.

He has recognized Mrs. Kringle's face.

He stumbles from the chair. Trembling. Mouth agape.

BARNES
Gotta be fuckin' kidding. No. No way. SHIIIT!!

He SCREAMS as we CUT TO:

EXT. WOODLANDS - WITH SAMANTHA - DRIVING

If you had to pick a night to die horribly, you'd be hard pressed to find a nicer one.

A country highway. Bathed in moonlight. Crusted with snow. Pontiac Sunbird, wending its way through the wooded slopes.

INT. SUNBIRD - SAME TIME

SAMANTHA drives while Earl (the SANTA we saw earlier) reclines, still drunk.

EARL
You're married what now, two months..?

He makes a thumb circle. Jabs his finger in and out of it:

EARL
You and Hal, how often you two..?

SAMANTHA
Stick our fingers in our hands and pull them out again? Every chance we get. Shut the fuck up.

EARL
Look, I know you *think* you want my son. And I'm not, you know, knocking him, guy's a straight arrow --

SAMANTHA
Earl, do me a favor. Every few words say "hic" and have bubbles come out your mouth, okay?

EARL
Goddammit, I'm not drunk, I'll prove it.

He starts touching his nose, arm extended, but on each return stroke he's poking his finger in her boobs, copping a feel. She SWATS at him, this is a new low.

That, gentle reader, is when the DEER walks into the road --

Fucks up their night altogether.

DEER FACT #25: It's been said, confronted with roadway deer, that the best course of action is to punch the gas. The idea, presumably, is to pop the animal over the roof, rather than risk dragging him *under* the car.

Samantha punches the gas.

IMPACTS the deer, crunch..!

And it comes THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD. All two hundred and fifteen pounds of it.

Actually, it only makes it *halfway* through --

But the fucking thing is ALIVE.

More than alive. KICKING. Thrashing.
Squawling with pain and rage.

A FLAILING HOOF

Takes out Earl. Kills him in less than a second. Collapses his skull.

Sam rides the wheel, screaming. An antler gouges her chest.
Rips. Draws blood. She SWERVES, madly --

Hits the tree doing fifty.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Sam goes airborne.

Explodes through the windshield, outward bound.
Shower of glass, spritz of blood...

And then she's flying. Slow motion, end over end...
We lose all SOUND. Silence as she tumbles.

Slow... Graceful...
Below and behind her, in total silence, the Sunbird ERUPTS.
Fireball, sky high --

Sam, floating. Describes a lazy arc in mid-air...

Whoomph-! She disappears into the snow.
Four foot drift. Swallows her.
Leaves her silhouette on the surface.

Around her, trees catch fire. Burn.

She lies in her impromptu sarcophagus. Out of sight.

THE FLAMING DEER

Totters from the wreck, thrashing. Scene from a nightmare.

Nightmare part two: from the snow, from a woman-shaped hole that we thought was a grave --

Arises a woman of blood.

She stumbles from the drift. Toward the wreck. And though it's clearly Sam Caine under all that crimson --

There's something wrong about her eyes.

En route to the car, she does an odd thing: she kneels beside the suffering deer, its flesh scorched and torn --

And she kills it. Puts it away with a sharp CRACK-!ing blow to the head.

Stands. Eyes squirming with madness. A beast herself.

The car's an inferno. Earl is dead. Sam turns away, wiping blood from her eyes --

Comes face to face with a snowman.
A jolly white fellow.
Carrot nose. Charcoal briquettes for eyes.
The icy man MELTS in the blast furnace heat.

Sam watches, fascinated.

Then she screams.
Then she crumples to the ground.

The snowman's eyes fall out. He melts away and away. CUT TO:

INT. PRISON LAUNDRY - NIGHTTIME

Back in stark white corridors. Silence. Late now.

A lone ORDERLY pushes a laundry cart down the basement hallway. Lights dim. Flickering.

He HEARS something behind him. Turns...

ORDERLY
... Hello..?

Nothing. While the orderly's back is turned, however --
A shape rises out of the laundry cart.

MR. BARNES slashes with a knife-edged hand.
Splinters his vertebrae.

EXT. PRISON - SEWER PIPE - MOMENTS LATER

Wearing the orderly's whites, Barnes SWIMS through sewage. Breath ragged. Face contorted with effort. With hate. DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAMANTHA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - TWO DAYS LATER

Samantha, having survived. Laid up now in an austere hospital room. Listening to silence.

Stares out the window at a sunlit tree. Head bandaged, one eye bloodshot and rimmed with purple. Frowns:

SAMANTHA
I want a cigarette, why do I want a cigarette..?

Outside, snow slithers. Her eyelids, slowly closing... Slides off the edge of consciousness.

IN THE DREAM

She's standing in a HALL OF MIRRORS. Looking at her reflection, multiplied and fragmented.

Samantha is naked. Her reflection is, also...

But her reflection is drenched in blood.

Samantha speaks:

SAMANTHA
What do you want from me?

The reflection eyes her grimly. Haggard. Tired.

REFLECTION
I want a cigarette.

SAMANTHA
I don't smoke.

REFLECTION
(chuckles)
You used to.

Samantha is suddenly holding a cigarette.
She raises it to her lips.
Her reflection MIRRORS her precisely.

Except Samantha COUGHS, chokes on the smoke --

While her bloody reflection takes a long, satisfying drag.

REFLECTION
Relax, you can drop the act. Nice and smooth, take another hit. There you go. See how easy it comes back?

They are now in perfect synchronicity. Sam inhales easily.

REFLECTION
I'm coming back. You know that, don't you? Name's Charly, by the way. And you like Marlboro reds.

The reflection grins. There's even blood on its TEETH.

INT. SAMANTHA'S HOME - DAY

Back at home, business as usual, pre-Christmas.
A COMMOTION has arisen:

Gingerly, bones still aching, Samantha moves toward the KITCHEN, cigarette perched in her mouth. HAL and CAITLIN trail behind, beseeching:

HAL
Honey, you can't cook, I'm not wrong about this.

SAMANTHA
I'm *remembering*, Hal. Things are coming back. Trust me, I'm a chef, I know it.

CAITLIN
Daddy, make her stop!

SAMANTHA
Hush. Go to the garden and get me something, anything. Not dirt, like a vegetable, go, man, go! I'm hot to trot.

INT./EXT. KITCHEN - SAME

Hal worriedly exits to the garden. Plucks a tomato and tosses it to Caitlin, who stands in the door.

HAL
Tomato.

Caitlin turns, tosses it to Sam --

CAITLIN
Tomato.

Who catches it, plops it on the cutting board and proceeds to DICE it to SMITHEREENS. Razor-thin slices.

Knife flying. Knife a blur. Missing her fingers by millimeters, never faltering, like a mad mumblety-pegger --

HAL
Onion, flying in.

Sam catches it. Knife flurries. Pieces, flying up.

SAMATHA
More. Faster.

And it becomes a bucket brigade.
Hal heaves veggies to Caitlin who spins and relays to Mom who slices, dices, purees, and even makes curly fries.

She's amazing. The quickest hands we've ever seen.

They keep coming, then. Faster and faster. HAL starts to lose it, starts lobbing them at Caitlin, too fast, one after another --

She giggles, starts throwing them overhand --

CAITLIN
Tomato. Tomato. Tomato.

And now it's a food fight, HAL starts hucking things in the window, PELTING Mom, and the floor is COVERED with food as he stumbles in laughing, scoops up Caitlin --

Samantha shakes her head, grinning, dices to pieces a last, lovely radish. Ends with a flourish, TA-DAH-!

Doesn't think: Flips the knife-point up on ONE FINGER. Tips it for balance, tosses and CATCHES it --

Lobs a tomato. Slings the knife without looking --

Pins it to the wall, KA-CHUK--!

Everyone goes silent. The knife, quivering. Caitlin and Hal turn as one, gaping at her. She shrugs numbly. Blinks.

SAMATHA
Uh... chefs do that.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Samantha surveys herself in the mirror. Grimaces.

SAMANTHA
Look at me, I'm gonna have a food baby.

Hal circles her waist with his arms. They look out the window at the snow. Pause, then Samantha speaks dreamily:

SAMANTHA
Had another memory today. I was looking in the window at Carter's... and I remembered the best Christmas present I ever got.

He watches her, not sure how to react.

SAMANTHA
Don't remember... what my mother looked like... but I remember one Christmas, her giving me a rabbit, made all of string. Wrapped in tiny little circles, like a baseball. She'd made it herself.

HAL
Were you that poor?

SAMANTHA
I don't think it was about money... see, it takes concentration... to wrap string in tiny little circles, and... I guess, while you're doing it, you have to be sober.
(beat)
I think she wasn't perfect... but I think she tried hard... wanted to love me...

Samantha shudders. Hugs herself, watching the snow.

SAMANTHA
God, let me remember... Let it all come back.

CUT TO:

INT. PLUSH LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A NAKED WOMAN

Is tied to a chair. She is crying.

Standing before her, what looks like a young GQ MODEL. Blonde. Gorgeous. Impeccably attired. He opens a rucksack while the woman stammers:

NAKED WOMAN
Please, Timothy... I know you gotta kill me, I know that... But use the gun, not the knife. Please. As a fucking favor, I'm begging you...

TIMOTHY
It'll be over soon.

NAKED WOMAN
Jesus, we were friends once, right..? I... I'm scared of the knife... Please, I can't handle getting shots at the doctor's, PLEASE..!

TIMOTHY
We're copycatting an outsider, Berta. The M.O. has to match.

The man called Timothy unsheaths a HUNTING KNIFE.

NAKED MAN
No. Not that, not the knife... Shoot me, please, for God's sake SHOOT ME!!

He flips through some PHOTOGRAPHS. Lights a cigarettte.

POV TIMOTHY: They are all CRIME SCENE PHOTOS. A naked woman. All multiple stab wounds. Timothy looks from the pictures to the girl. From the girl to the pictures.

And a cellular phone BLEEPS at his side. He takes it:

TIMOTHY
Timothy.

VOICE (O.S.)
Message from Pentecost, are you available?

TIMOTHY
Not really. What is it?

He shrugs at the girl. Points to the phone, rolls his eyes.

VOICE (O.S.)
Earlier tonight our former colleague Mr. Barnes escaped from the facility where he was incarcerated. Something he saw on TV distressed him so badly he had to be sedated. Then, around 1:00 a.m. he killed an orderly and fled.

TIMOTHY
I'm sorry he missed Empty Nest. How the fuck is it my business?

VOICE (O.S.)
Barnes was overheard talking to himself, sir. Under sedation.
(beat)
He said something disturbing. He said "Baltimore is active."

Timothy takes a hit off the cigarette. Speaks crisply:

TIMOTHY
Tell Pentecost that Berta's safe contained the formula and batch number for the substance. Very catalytic, but it can be transported. As for this other crap, don't waste my time. Mr. Barnes had a wet dream, been known to happen where Baltimore's concerned. Timothy out.

He hangs up. Stubs out his cigarette. Props the photograph on a table where he can see it.

TIMOTHY
If I miss something, just let me know.

He walks over to the chair, studies her torso. Carefully selects a spot and sticks in the knife as we CUT TO:

EXT. SHOPPING CENTER - DAY

SAMANTHA and HAL. In line at the market. Samantha reads PEOPLE magazine. At the next register, two Canadians speak in rapid-fire French. Hal beams:

HAL
Don't you love hearing people speak French? Beautiful language.

One Canadian notices Samantha, says to his buddy:

CANADIAN GUY
Ooo, j'aimerais la baiser, et apres essuyer ma bite sur les rideaux. (We subtitle: I'd like to fuck her and wipe my dick on her drapes.)

Without looking up, Samantha chucks a can of cat food and beans him in the head. SLAM CUT TO:

SAMANTHA/PSYCHIATRIST - ON THE PHONE - INTERCUT

Samantha on the phone to her shrink. Can barely contain herself.

SAMATHA
I speak French.

PSYCHIATRIST
You do.

SAMANTHA
You bet your life, fluent French, whatever the fuck that means.
(chortles)
Quand j'étais a l'ecole, J'ai eu un professeur qui s'est fabriqué du dentifrice!

PSYCHIATRIST
You just said when you were in school, your teacher was made of toothpaste.

SAMANTHA
Right, he was, you got a problem with that? Pasty Joe, we called him. Look, the accent's perfect, so piss off. I'M A FRENCH CHEF, YA-HOO.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - AKRON, OHIO - TWILIGHT

MITCH HENESSY delivers to his ten year-old son TODD the *Midtown Saturn Orbiting Precinct*, complete with action figures. Henessey points to the box:

HENESSEY
...and I like the jail here, see, they got a Zinnite in there now. And this here, it's an escape chute for the Borian, he's a cat. Moves quick, don't take no shit neither. See, you can make him shoot the guard -- ah, hell, look, I played with it a little myself, I'm sorry.

A VOICE interruipts them:

VOICE (O.S.)
TODD, COME FOR SUPPER. NOW.

An awkward pause. Henessey scowls.

HENESSEY
Hey, you go ahead, um... hope you like the present.

TODD
It's awesome, Dad. Mom, though, she...
(sighs)
She gets weird. On my birthday, when you gave me the Schwinn... she called bicycle stores to see if there'd been any robberies.

Henessey manages to control his face. Says tightly:

HENESSEY
I don't steal them locally.

INT. TELEPHONE BOOTH - MINUTES LATER

Henessey is on the phone to his ex-wife.

HENESSEY
... Because I didn't want to talk in front of him, now listen --

EX-WIFE (O.S.)
No, you listen, the boy simply does not <u>need</u> this.

HENESSEY
Need what? I been out eight months, I'm back doing skip traces, you got me stealing fuckin' bicycles?

EX-WIFE (O.S.)
This is a Christian household, Mitch. Shrink told me what those men did to you in prison. If I see Todd developing any homosexual tendencies, I swear I'll --

He slams down the phone. Cracks it. CUT TO:

INT. SAMANTHA CAINE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Samantha Caine is out of bed. In fact, she's in her bathroom. Shaving her legs.

They are long and supple. A thin layer of bronze skin over cables of sinew. Whatever age she is, she's breath-taking.

She scrapes under one knee. Inspects. All finished. Tosses her disposable Flicker, stands --

Notices her husband's STRAIGHT RAZOR. Hanging next to a strop. She stares at it, frowning. Drawn to it...

Picks it up. It GLISTENS in the light.

For a moment she pauses, razor in hand...
Looks in the MIRROR. Stares at her reflection. Warily, remembering her previous dream...

It stares back impassively. She frowns. It frowns.

With a deep sigh, Samantha turns away --

HER REFLECTION DOES NOT.

It stays right fucking put -- except now it's *smiling*. Malignant. Deadly.

Sam feels something wrong. Spins back toward the mirror --

And her reflected arm comes through the looking glass.

Reaches into Sam's world and CUTS HER THROAT.
Mirror-image razor, slicing...
A spray of blood. A wheezing scream.

INT. SAMANTHA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Samantha's eyes POP OPEN. She wakes from the nightmare. Feels for her throat. Sucks air in great gasping gulps.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NEXT DAY

Samantha's daughter CAITLIN is astride her new two-wheeler BICYCLE. Samantha finishes removing the training wheels. Caitlin looks nervous.

She points to her stuffed TEDDY BEAR.

CAITLIN
Put Perkins in the basket. He's luck.

SAMANTHA
Mr. Perkins, going in the basket.

CAITLIN
Are the training wheels off?

SAMANTHA
Just pretend they're still there. Piece of cake. You can do it.

CAITLIN
Wait..! I'm scared.

SAMANTHA
Shhh. Nothing to be scared of. Pretend you're on Police Heat, you're tough. Let's go, now. Three, two, one...

CAITLIN
Mom, I can't do it, swear --

Samantha sets her sailing. Laughs excitedly.

The bike weaves, side to side. Wobbles. Hits the curb and topples with a CRASH. Spills Caitlin to the pavement. Now she's CRYING.

CAITLIN
Ouch--! I can't do it, it HURTS-!

Samantha walks over briskly. Face set in determined lines.

SAMANTHA
Nonsense. You can do it. You don't want to, but you can.

CAITLIN
My arm hurts, please take me home..!

SAMANTHA
You can go home, Caitlin. You can ride there.

An unpleasant note is edging into her voice. The louder the kid cries, the more Samantha starts to SIMMER.

CAITLIN
Mom, no...!

CAINE
Look, I know you're afraid, that's the whole *point*, can you see that? Now stop being a little baby and get on the damn bike.

She hoists her onto the seat. Caitlin cries and hollers.

SAMANTHA
You gonna be afraid of things all your life? Huh? That what you want?

CAITLIN
My wrist hurts..!

Snap. Something lets go. Suddenly Samantha's right in her face:

SAMANTHA
Life is pain. Get used to it. See, you *will* ride this bike home, princess. You will ride it and you will not fall again, is that understood..?

Eyes cold and lifeless. She is not herself. CUT TO:

A BANK OF TELEVISION SCREENS

Springs to life, displays a dozen times over the shining, beautiful face of SAMANTHA CAINE. Dressed as Mrs. Claus.

A suit with wire rimmed glasses spins in his chair and says:

TECHNICIAN
Is that her, sir?

TIMOTHY stares raptly at her striking features. Shakes his head. Utter disbelief.

TIMOTHY
In a parade? In Ohio. I'll be Goddamned.
(beat)
If she's alive, she may try to contact the old man. We should tap his phone.

He turns to another man:

TIMOTHY
Get me Pentecost ASAP. He may want to authorize a hit team.

He returns his attention to the TV screen. Sam is gorgeous.

TIMOTHY
Well, look at you, sweetheart. Long time since Paris. Long time...

INT. SAMANTHA'S HOUSE - TWILIGHT

CAITLIN huddles on the steps, itching at her brand new WRIST CAST. Eavesdropping on her parents as

IN THE KITCHEN

A counter-top TV is on, Three Stooges. SAMANTHA samples the topping of a cream pie. Stares at the linoleum floor.

SAMANTHA
She said her wrist hurt. I didn't know it was broken.

HAL regards her with angry, vindictive eyes.

HAL
She rode all the way home. She didn't fall, not once. She didn't cry.
(beat)
You're good. You should work with kids, you know that?

He takes a breath, composes himself.

HAL
We can still make six o'clock mass.

Sam surveys her perfect kitchen. Runs her hand over a hanging pot. Looks sadly at her husband. Whispers:

SAMANTHA
A private detective's coming by tonight, he... he's found something.
(beat)
I may have to go away. For a bit.

She lights the cigarette. Hal stares at her.

HAL
Go away. With a detective. Jesus, it's the fucking holidays, Sam. You have a kid --

SAMANTHA
With a hand I fucking *broke*, God, I can't even remember what I said to her..!
(beat)
Go, go without me. I don't... feel like drinking blood today.

HAL
Sam..!

SAMANTHA
Don't worry, the bastard's keen on you, Hal. Me? I'm filthy. He wants to burn me, you think I can't feel that?

They stand in tableau. An electric silence...

Broken quite suddenly by the sound of SINGING.

CHRISTMAS CAROLERS. Outside the front door. The sweet strains of "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" wafts in through the window.

Except the sweet strains ain't so sweet. These carolers are TERRIBLE. Missing by a country octave.

Sam and Hal can't help it. They look at each other:

HAL
Bleeeechhh..!

They burst out laughing.

EXT. THE FRONT PORCH - JUST OUTSIDE THE DOOR - NIGHT

THE CAROLERS

Continue their interesting rendition. Snowflakes fall. All is quiet. All is bright.

Especially bright is the SHOTGUN BARREL pressed to the throat of the lead soprano.

The weapon's an HE-109. Over and under combo. Shotgun on top. High explosive cannon on bottom.

You'd sing shitty too.

INT. HOUSE - SAME

SAMANTHA walks to the door. Carrying a bowl festive M&M's. Just as she gets to the door --

The singing stops.

The sound of FOOTFALLS. Running off into the night.

Samantha frowns, puzzled. OPENS THE DOOR --
The carolers are gone.

MR. BARNES remains. Gun in hand.

Escaped convict. Trained killer.

BARNES
Evening, Charly. Long time.

He swings the gun. SLAMS the barrel into her.
Glass shatters. M&M's everywhere.

She gapes at him. Dumbstruck, unable to THINK.
Hurry it up, lady, we need a decision, live or *die* --

SHE GRABS THE GUN BARREL

Snaps out of it, just like that. Wrenches the gun --
They reel and rock.

ON THE STAIRS

Appears seven year-old CAITLIN, eyes like saucers:

CAITLIN
Mommy. . !

SAMANTHA
GET OUUTTTTT!!!!

Sam's cry is a veritable shriek, as

HAL

Appears, snarling. POUNCES on Barnes --
Suceeds in annoying him.

For his trouble, Hal gets three broken ribs and a trip to the fireplace. Airborne. Comes down, bam-!

He catches fire. SCREAMS. Rolls over and over on his broken ribs, as

BARNES

Kicks Samantha in the gut. She collapses onto the stairs. Splinters the bannister.

Then he sees CAITLIN. Top of the stairs, she's paralyzed.

SAMANTHA
NO!!!!

Barnes is already moving forward. SPIN-COCKS the shotgun, draws a bead --

Promptly slips on festive M&M's. Goes down.
Gun goes off, WHAM--! A flat concussion.

The bannister EXPLODES. A storm of wood chips, as

SAMANTHA

Surges up the stairs, toward her daughter --

BARNES. On the ground. Fires, WHAM!

The wall disappears THREE INCHES FROM CAITLIN'S HEAD.

Blown to shreds, you can SEE OUTDOORS.

Samantha doesn't miss a beat. GRABS her daughter --

FLINGS HER OUTSIDE.

Through the hole in the wall. Takes her by the belt and fucking HURLS her out into space..!

EXT. SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME TIME

Two stories up. The kid is ejected, flailing.

Floats in SLOW MOTION. Across a ten foot gap --

INTO THE TREEHOUSE.

Sails head over heels into the place. Hits with a CRASH. Alive and unhurt.

BACK INSIDE THE HOUSE

Samantha didn't even look. Didn't need to.

Here comes BARNES. Up the staircase. Reloading.

Samantha launches herself down the stairs.
COLLIDES, head on -- Down they go.

Barnes, rolls to his feet. Propels her into the KITCHEN.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

She hits, WHAM, spray of cat food --
SKIDDING. Across the linoleum.

Slams to a stop. Hard. Cupboard pops open, out comes the IRONING BOARD. Falls into place, SNAP--!

A GUN BLAST disintegrates it. Reveals Sam, cowering behind.

BARNES
I want my eye back, bitch.

Samantha struggles to her feet. Dazed. Barnes abandons the shotgun. Takes the IRON down from its spot on the shelf --

Begins to beat her with it.

Savagely. Methodically.

Samantha takes hit after hit. Head snapping to and fro. Reeling backward...

Still he comes. No mercy. SLAM. To the head.

Bleeding now. Stumbles... Raises her arms pitifully --

Still he hits her. DENTS the iron.

BARNES
Goddamn you. Fight me. What's wrong with you, *fight me*!

CLOSE ON TV

Joe Besser (the gayest of all the Stooges) takes a pie in the face. Mugs wildly.

Barnes raises his arm for the killing stroke --

Samantha takes Hal's cream pie from the counter and shatters every bone in Barnes' face.

Comes from nowhere. Back foot planted, body twisting, entire organism focused into the outstretched arm, WHACK-!

We have never seen anyone move this fast.

Samantha RECOILS. Startled by what she's done --

The glass dish is SPLINTERED into his head. It STICKS there. Begins to fill up with blood.

He topples. Hits the linoleum.

She lunges. Straddles him. Grabs the pie dish and brings it down like an axe. Breaks his SKULL.

Stillness. She hovers. Breathing hard.

The barking dog "Jingle Bells" plays inanely in the background.

Samantha stares. Trembling. Pokes the body. Nothing. Pokes it again. Still nothing.

She leans forward. Grips his neck and wrenches, CRACK-!

Just making sure.

She's out of it. In shock. Glaring at her own hands as if demanding an excuse for their behavior.

There is pie filling all over her fingers. She kneels beside the corpse. Catatonic.

Absent-mindedly licks the bloodied cream filling from her fingers. That's when she turns her head --

And HAL is standing in the doorway. Wide-eyed. He has seen Samantha break the man's neck.

She looks at him. Frowns.

SAMANTHA
It took me three seconds. That's... that's good, huh..?

He stares, dumbstruck. She blinks. Snaps out of it.

SAMANTHA
Caitlin. We gotta find Caitlin.

She gets up. We RUN with her to the front door -- she flings it open and there's

MITCHELL HENESSEY

Private dick. She runs right into him.

HENESSEY
Hey--! Slow down. The kid's okay, she's in my car, what the hell is going on?

Henessey spins, as FOUR POLICE CRUISERS pull up. Vomit up a bevy of COPS, swarming toward the house.

He spins back to Samantha -- As she collapses to the floor.

FADE OUT.

Pause. FADE IN:

ESTABLISHING - SAMANTHA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Early morning quiet. HENESSEY and SAMANTHA are throwing suitcases into the back of his battered Chrysler.

HOUSE - AFTER EVERYTHING'S PACKED

Samantha, she's looked better. Kneels beside Caitlin, says softly:

SAMANTHA
This man's going to help me find things out. If I don't... we may not be safe.

Caitlin looks at the floor. Doesn't respond.

SAMANTHA
I had a dream..? I was on a path, it was dark and cold all around. And suddenly I felt it -- no one was thinking of me. At that moment, no one on earth. I cried because I was scared to be alone like that.

She reaches in a cupboard. Produces a box of CANDLES. Lights a match, touches flame to one of them.

SAMANTHA
Do this: I want you to light a candle and keep it in the kitchen window. And never, ever let it go out, know why?

Because as long as it burns it means you're thinking of me. And if I'm alone... if it's dark and I'm lost... It's how I'll find my way home.

She touches Caitlin's wrist cast. Pain in her features. She grabs a marker pen and writes on the plaster: I LOVE YOU. Under it she writes a TELEPHONE NUMBER.

SAMANTHA
That's for a portable phone. I keep it with me, you call me anytime, you don't worry about the bill. Okay? And stay up and watch Police Heat as much as you want. Alex can sleep over.

Caitlin nods. Lower lip starts to go. She holds out Mr, Perkins to her mother:

CAITLIN
For luck.

Samantha takes him. Turns away, eyes brimming. Throws her arms around her husband HAL. He whispers:

HAL
No matter what you find, I'm not scared. Not of you. Not ever.

SERIES OF SHOTS: EXT. SUBURBAN TOWN

As it fades behind Henessey's Chrysler. Leaving behind porch-bound elders, dimestore clerks. Grinning children, hair like spun straw. All fading...

EXT. STORAGE RENTAL PLACE - DAY

Henessey pulls up, singing with the radio. Loudly. He's got the lyrics wrong: "I'm not talking 'bout the linen... And I don't wanna change your life..."

Samantha endures as much as she can. Speaks up:

SAMANTHA
"Movin' in."

HENESSEY
Hah?

SAMANTHA
It's not linen. The song's not about linen.

They clamber from the car. She drags on her cigarette. Henessey grins:

HENESSEY
Lookit you. Thelma or Louise, which?

SAMANTHA
The one shot the guy in the head, which one was that?

HENESSEY
I forget. Hell, I liked that picture. With what's-her-name. One with the jugs.

SAMANTHA
Sarandon?

HENESSEY
Sarandon. That's it. See, that's how guys keep it straight: Geena Davis is the pretty one, but Sarandon's got the tits. I mean, you're a gorgeous lady --

SAMANTHA
But Sarandon --

HENESSEY
Sarandon, yeah, well. That's a guy thing. I mean, you can see 'em coming around a corner, you got time to comb your hair.

He approaches the front of the building. Shoves his sunglasses into his sportcoat. SINGS:

HENESSEY
Putting my glasses in my cooooat..."

Samantha looks at him like he's sprouted wings.

HENESSEY
I sing what I do so I'll remember it. "Turning off the downstairs liiiight..." You know?

Samantha smiles thinly. The man's a lunatic.

INT. STORAGE FACILTY - DAY

An old, walrus-mustached IRISHMAN ushers them down a concrete hallway. The old man hangs back with Henessey. Whispers:

WALRUS MAN
Aye, the owner, he's ne'er shown hide nor hair, but the lady's welcome to whatsoe'er she wishes, says he. I'faith, she's welcome to the building, 'twere up to me, ne'er has trod these halls a lass so easy on the eye, divil take me if I'm lyin'.

Henessey lights a cigarette, says:

HENESSEY
Do me a favor. Say, "Always after me Lucky Charms."

ANGUS
"Always after me Lucky Charms."

HENESSEY
Thanks. Just needed to hear that.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Drab, musty. Filled with disused tables, lamps, farm implements... Jimmy Hoffa watches TV in the corner.

HENESSEY
See anything you recognize?

SAMANTHA
Yeah, this dirt used to be outside my window, shut up and let me look.

Sam hefts a SUITCASE onto a bench. OPENS it -- Draws a sharp breath:

SAMANTHA
Ay-i-yi!

Clothes to kill for. Smooth velvet. Creamy silk. The finest, the best. The sexiest. Sam peeks at the tags:

SAMANTHA
Size four, no way. You know how long it's been since I could wear a size four?
(beat)
Can't be mine. Can they..?

She checks the case for INTIALS -- *C.E.B.* Who..?

Henessey grunts. In his book, well dressed is clean underwear. Whistles. Holds up a torn NOTEBOOK:

HENESSEY
An entire notebook, two lousy addresses, pretty funny, huh..? Plus dates and times, looks like.

He takes out her check, written to him. Compares. The writing's IDENTICAL. They exchange looks.

Meanwhile, her hands, still pawing through the suitcase...

A SHAPE. She feels it. At the bottom of the case. Lifts up the mound of fabric --

A .357 Magnum sniper rifle. Disassembled.

Samantha looks like she just took a stomach punch.

Up until now, it could've been adrenalin. She could still have been just a schoolteacher suffering fugues.

But the fugues are no longer fantasy.
A rifle is reality.

Her head's buzzing. She plunks the clothing back in place.
Henessey missed it, didn't see.

HENESSEY
Anything else in there?

SAMANTHA
No. Just more clothes.
(takes a breath)
Hey, those addresses, that's something, don't you think?

CUT TO:

INT. COLONIAL STYLE HOME - LATE AFTERNOON

NATHAN WINDEMAN is in a bad mood. A frail-looking man, mid seventies. Tiredly spooning a bowl of soup.

His sister ALICE watches TV nearby. In her lap a Pomeranian cleans itself.

Windeman scowls. Clears his throat.
Speaks with an upper crust English tone:

NATHAN
Alice, please..?

Alice stares at him. Uncomprehending.

NATHAN
Your dog, Alice. It and my appetite are mutually exclusive.

ALICE
What's wrong with the dog?

NATHAN
It's simple. He's been licking his asshole for three straight hours. I submit to you that there's nothing there worth more than an hour's attention, and I should think whatever he's attempting to dislodge is either gone for good or there to stay. Wouldn't you agree?

Theatrical? Nah. The old bat scoops up her pooch and beats feet for the door. THE PHONE RINGS. Nathan snatches it up:

NATHAN
Hello?

The voice is soft. Controlled:

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
Hello, Mr. Windeman, I got this number from a realtor in Pennsylvania. I'd like to speak with you.

NATHAN
Who.. who is this?

SAMANTHA
You tell me, Mr. Windeman.

Nathan pales. Blinks once. Twice. Manages:

NATHAN
... Charly..?

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
My full name, please.

NATHAN
God, it really is you..!? Chapter, they think you're dead, *everyone* thinks --

SAMANTHA
My full name. Please..!

A pause. Then:

NATHAN
You don't know your name.

He chews his lower lip, mind racing. Jesus, no joke, this is *her*... He fights to control his voice:

NATHAN
Your full name... is Charlene Elizabeth Baltimore.

INT. SURVEILLANCE VAN - SAME TIME

A MAN in shirtsleeves flips a switch. Speaks into a headset:

MAN
Signal Pentecost. We just got her, she made contact. Initiating phone trace.

INT. HOUSE - BACK WITH NATHAN

NATHAN
Charly, don't talk, just listen: We have to meet, understand? We have to meet *right away*. Don't come here, it's not secure. I'll come to you.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
Meet me off I-79. Highmile exit, the bus station. Eleven a.m.

She hangs up. Nathan stares, trembling.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DRIVING - NIGHT

Henessey and Samantha, sitting in traffic.
Mind you, there aren't normally traffic jams on country roads.
Something which has not not escaped Samantha:

SAMANTHA
Son of a bitch. We don't have time for this, of all the cocksucking bullshit --

HENESSEY
Whoa. Ms. Caine, no offense, but do you normally swear this much?

SAMANTHA
What are you, a Mormon?

HENESSEY
No, ma'am, it's just that... well, when we met you're all, "Oh, fooey, I burned the darn cupcakes." Now, you go into a bar, ten minutes later sailors come running out, they can't take it.

Just then, THREE POLICE CRUISERS blow by, sirens screaming.
Henessey frowns, puzzled.

HENESSEY
What the hell..? Lemme check the scanner.

He switches on a police band radio. Listens, hears:

VOICE (O.S.)
... without endangering the hostages, over...
... Roger that, two-niner. PCP confirmed, he's on a fuse, please provide backup, over...
... Conneaut, I'm waiting on Special Weapons, sorry, over...

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - CONNEAUT LAKE, PA. - SAME

POLICE FLASHERS, spinning. Cop cars, incoming. SLAMMING to a halt. Disgorging uniformed cops.

THE DINER

Is rapidly surrounded. Its cheery decor, the giant roofbound Santa, all in stark contrast --

To the SCREAMING we hear, dimly, from within.

INT. DINER - SAME

Hostage drama, unfolding. The perp's a big ugly meatloaf with his mitts on a waitress. She's sixteen, she's a baby.

She's sucking the barrel of his shotgun. His finger on the trigger. From outside, we hear the COPS:

COP VOICE (O.S.)
GIVE YOURSELF UP AT ONCE. LEAVE THE BUILDING, HANDS ON HEAD. DROP THE WEAPON, REPEAT, DROP THE WEAPON.

Mr. Shotgun snorts laughter. Does a little dance, yells:

MR. SHOTGUN
I'm the man! I'm the man! I elicit the explicit!

He jams a hand under the waitress's skirt.

EXT. DINER - SAME TIME

The police are just starting to re-route traffic. A highway cop signals to HENESSEY, "Turn around, go back."

INT. CAR - SAME TIME

Henessey swears. Swings wide, when suddenly a HAND clutches his arm. He looks over and suppresses a shiver --

Samantha's eyes have gone dead and cold.

She lights a cigarette, shakes out the match and says:

SAMANTHA
Go up this hill.

HENESSEY
What's up the hill?

SAMANTHA
I know how to fix this. I know what to do here, get us fucking moving again.

(beat)
Drive up the fucking hill!

Now Henessey shivers. Cranks the wheel as we CUT TO:

EXT. HILLTOP - OVERLOOKING TOWN - NIGHT

Henessey has pulled over into a stand of pine trees. He puts on gloves. Exits the car.

SAMANTHA is already rummaging in the trunk. Henessey walks round the car in time to see her assembling a .357 Magnum sniper rifle. He blanches:

HENESSEY
Where the shit did you get that?

SAMANTHA
Wait here.

EXT. HILLTOP - SAME TIME

In the background, kids are SLEDDING. Launching themselves from the hilltop.

Samantha moves through the trees. Brisk. Determined. Henessey follows behind, a study in disbelief.

HENESSEY
Whoa, whoa, time out. Is this a joke?

He grabs her arm. She SWATS him. Hard. Nearly knocks him on his ass.

SAMANTHA
Don't touch me.

HENESSEY
Ms. Caine, pardon my saying, you're acting really fucked up.

SAMANTHA
I'm taking necessary action. Go back to the car.

She flops down on a deserted knoll. Rests the rifle barrel on a dead branch. Flicks on the STARLIGHT SCOPE.

HENESSEY
Sam, Goddammit, you're gonna kill someone with that!

SAMANTHA
Duh.

She focuses through the scope.

POV SAMANTHA: Framed in spectral GREEN, the diner's interior. Hostages. Crying mothers. Children, catatonic.

Through the short-order aperture -- a limited view of the kitchen. He's in there. Girl, eating both barrels... Samantha's jaw tightens.

HENESSEY
No. That's a football field away, that's fucking insane, Sam!

SAMANTHA
Lee Enfield Mark IV. At three hundred yards, vertical drop of six inches, so go spit.

Some LITTLE KIDS have wandered over, intrigued by the sweet-looking lady with the high-powered boomstick.

KID #1
Hey, lady, that thing for real?

SAMANTHA
(without looking up)
Nope. It's a toy.

Henessey nods, clears his throat:

HENESSY
Yeah, this is Muriel Nintendo, the president of the company. She's doing research for a game.

KID #2 scowls at Henessey:

KID #2
Is not, nimrod. The president of Nintendo is Minoru Arakawa, he's a man in his forties.

HENESSEY
Look, fuck you, junior --

SAMANTHA
Shhhhh. Quiet!

She raises a hand for silence. Eye to the scope...

Suddenly starts to shake. Something's wrong. Her resolve, wavering. She whispers:

SAMATHA
Oh... Okay... Wait a minute...What am I doing..? This... this is all *wrong*....

She stares through the scope. Blinking. Sweating.

POV SAM: Mr. Shotgun appears in frame. Shouts at the cops outside. Then he leans in, whispers something to the waitress --

Sam swears. Chambers a round.

SAMANTHA
He's gonna do the girl.

HENESSEY
How the fuck can you tell?

She steadies the rifle. Takes aim.

SAMANTHA
I read lips.

She fires.

Splintered CRACK--! In the diner's window, a tiny HOLE.

INT. DINER

Another tiny hole, spat-!
Mr. Shotgun dies on his feet.
In the back of his head, a BIG hole.

Outgoing matter. Flung. Spattered to the grill where it sizzles along with burnt hamburger.
He drops.
Screams. Pandemonium.

EXT. HILLTOP - MOMENTS LATER

Samantha slams the trunk of the Chrysler. Gets in the passenger side without a word. Henessey pulls away.

INT. CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Samantha stares straight ahead. Gives a high, brittle laugh:

SAMANTHA
I keep killing people.

She laughs again. Henessey favors her with a look reserved for people with major deformities. Suddenly she says:

SAMANTHA
Pull over.

He stops the car. She gets out. Stumbles across the shoulder. Kneels. Throws up.

Henessey watches. Lights a smoke with trembling hands.

CLOSE ON SAMANTHA

Kneeling. Crying. Wretched sobs.

SAMANTHA
Had to, he... he would've killed her... Had to... Oh God I took him, such a good shot... I felt proud of it, such a shot, Jesus, *how could I be proud..?*
(sobs)
I'm scared... I want to go home...

Henessey kneels beside her awkwardly. She clutches his shoulder. Presses her head to his chest. Cries.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

Yes, it certainly is. CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - SAME TIME.

THE PRESIDENT is seated in his robe and slippers, smoking a pipe. Before him sits A MAN in his sixties, sporting a mane of silver hair. The President shakes his head:

PRESIDENT
Say it again, I'm a little slow. Better yet, I'll try it. You lost an operative, a trained counterassassin, and you just saw her on TV in a Christmas parade.

LONE MAN
On TV, yes. It's three weeks old, intelligence just caught it. Mr. President, we think this woman killed a man earlier tonight in Pennsylvania.

PRESIDENT
Charlene Baltimore. Doesn't ring a bell.

LONE MAN
She's classified, it shouldn't.
(beat)
This person can hurt us, sir.

PRESIDENT
Fine. I'll put NSA on it, dispatch an investigator --

LONE MAN
Sir, understand me, this woman *knows* things. The backstage take on Nicaragua and Iran. Where the bodies are buried, all the names. And now, with this current lab rat mess --

Pause. The President says nothing.

LONE MAN
Sir, soft-pedal this to NSA and allow Chapter to handle it.

PRESIDENT
Jesus. This is serious.

LONE MAN
This woman's been a ghost since 1987. Presumed dead. Now, after eight years, Baltimore is active, Mr. President, agenda unknown.

PRESIDENT
A woman.

LONE MAN
Forget gender. Colonel Baltimore is the single deadliest individual I've ever encountered. She... scares me. Understand?

PRESIDENT
Yes, yes, I believe you. Just one question:
(beat)
What the fuck's she doing in a Christmas parade???

INT. MOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Dim and sleazy. Henessey sits at the bar, glowering. He's good at it. Samantha is beside him, dazed.

SAMANTHA
You're telling me my hands didn't shake..?

Henessey says nothing. Pissed. Samantha takes a swig of Iron City Beer. Speaks, staring at the middle distance:

SAMANTHA
When Caitlin gets bored, she'll throw a blanket over a table, you know? Crawls under it and that's her house. Mr. Perkins is her husband. Playing house, all pretend.
(beat)
Is it possible... that's what I've been doing..?

HENESSEY
Fucking a stuffed bear? I hope not.

He stands, tosses a five onto the bar. His mind made up.

SAMANTHA
What are you doing?

HENESSEY
You wanna keep going, good luck. I'm driving back to Ohio. You're free to come with me.

He bangs out the door. Into the night.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - SAME

Henessey walks to his car. Samantha behind him, distraught:

SAMANTHA
Henessey, don't flake out on me. I need help, please..!

HENESSY
Don't bust my chops, okay? Go home. There's kids stealing candy, maybe you can pick 'em off from the trees.

She slaps him. HARD. He falls back, stunned.

SAMANTHA
I'll spell it out for you, ready? I have no future, I can't go home. Until I know what's happening, I'm in fucking *prison*, you know how that feels..?

HENESSEY
Yeah, matter of fact. Four years inside. Marion, Illinois, real shithole. Get in the car.

SAMANTHA
I'm sorry.
(clears her throat)
Um... what did you..?

HENESSEY
Me and a partner, we handled money. Guy hated me. One weekend, when the creep was conveniently gone..? Some bonds disappeared from his office. And lo and behold, when the police responded to an anonymous tip, you'll never guess what just happened to be sitting in my closet.

SAMANTHA
The bonds. Your partner put them there?

HENESSEY
(laughs)
Hell no, I did, I stole the fucking things.

He's serious. Samantha frowns, a little thrown -- Then she snorts, loses it.

They both lean against his Chrysler.

HENESSEY
Now every dollar I hand my kid, he asks his mother did I steal it.

He smiles ruefully. Spits. A pause, then:

HENESSEY
No more killing.

Samantha's voice is cool and level:

SAMANTHA
No more killing.

She blows her nose.

SAMANTHA
It was a helluva shot, wasn't it..?

EXT. INTERSTATE 79 - OVERHEAD SHOT - MORNING

A JETCOPTER BLASTS INTO FRAME. Bell Ranger, passenger transport. Descends over the interstate.

INT. COPTER - SAME

Four seasoned middle-aged men with bland faces. Seated like soldiers awaiting combat.

Up front, the PILOT speaks into a radio mic:

PILOT
We're holding near the drop zone. Awaiting instructions, over.

INTERCUT - TIMOTHY AND PILOT - ON RADIO

The ubiquitous TIMOTHY perches in his communications stronghold. Replies expansively:

TIMOTHY
Good morning, staff, listen up: subject Baltimore is armed and dangerous, in addition to being dead for eight years, so take no chances. She's back in the field in possession of our employer's identity, which, as you know, renders her a priority risk.
(beat)
In other words, just keep shooting til you can't recognize the bitch.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

The only thing missing is a sign which reads, "Please don't kill yourself," as you leave. The asphalt wasteland is stark and dead.

SAMANTHA AND HENESSEY clamber out of the beat-up Chrysler. Henessey sings to himself:

HENESSEY
"Putting my keeeys in my breeeast pocket..."

Consults his watch:

HENESSEY
Ten minutes. I got a bad feeling about this.

He crosses to the trunk, opens it. Rummages in the spare tire well. Brings out a .38 revolver. Stuffs it in his pocket. Closes the trunk.

INT. BUS STATION - SAME TIME

They enter the huge terminal building. Cross toward the restaurant portion. An ugly girl passes Henessey.

HENESSEY
You know how that girl could be better looking? Cut off her face and let the scab grow back.

Samantha ignores him, she's used to it by now. They pass a TV SET, bolted to the wall.

ONSCREEN

Is CNN footage of a sidewalk bombing in Belfast.

CNN COMMENTATOR
Violence in Northern Ireland continues today, despite a plea by British prime minister John Major --

Samantha stops suddenly. A spark.
Vestigal memory, struggling to surface --

HENESSEY
You okay? You look funny.

SAMANTHA
I... I really don't know, I got... a flash of something. An emotion.

She rubs her eyes, expression pained.

SAMANTHA
I... I hurt my father.

HENESSEY
You remember your father?

SAMANTHA
No, not at all. If... I saw him on the street, I, uh... I wouldn't...

Her voice breaks. She's utterly miserable. Henessey leans in, says softly:

HENESSEY
Ms. Caine, last week at a party I ran into a girl I knew from college and we chatted for a few minutes. And it wasn't til I was driving home on the freeway that I remembered I'd screwed her in the back of a car once.
(beat)
Everyone forgets.

He pats her arm. Smiles reassuringly. A pause. She stares.

SAMANTHA
That's it? That's your helpful story? Jesus Christ!

HENESSEY
No, see, all's I'm saying is you're not alone.

SAMANTHA
Oh, shut up. You know something? Maybe I did horrible things, but I don't do them anymore. I have a life now. A family, I teach third grade.

HENESSEY
You shot a guy in the head.

SAMANTHA
Oh. Oh. You're never gonna let me forget that, are you?

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN

Approaches, tapping a newspaper in his palm.

SAMANTHA
Oh, shit, that's him.

She straightens Henessey's tie. Fluffs him. He scowls:

HENESSEY
You through?

SAMATHA
He may be a nice man. Don't embarass me.

They walk toward the man. Samantha waves. Adjusts Henessey's coat to hide the GUN BULGE. Whispers:

SAMANTHA
Is that a gun in your pocket or do you have an erection?

HENESSEY
You're funny. You write that yourself? It's illegal, just so you know.

SAMANTHA
Having an erection?

HENESSEY
Yes. That's exactly what I meant. Christ, I can't even talk around you.

SAMANTHA
(under her breath)
It worked.

As they near the man, Sam flashing a dazzling smile:

SAMANTHA
Hi. Mr. Windeman?

Not exactly, no.

She watches, oddly detached, as something EMERGES from under the newspaper --

Takes a second to register, then:

SAMANTHA
GUN!

Slow motion. Samantha TACKLES HENESSEY. Hurls them both to the floor --

DURING THEIR FALL

Stuff happens:

She clutches his sportcoat. Grips his .38 special THROUGH THE FABRIC and squeezes...

A sharp report. The jacket, shredded.

Another. BLAM-!

They land, a tangle of arms and legs. Meanwhile

THE HITMAN

Just caught two in the chest. He rears up, Uzi SPITTING --

Waitress takes a burst in the FACE. Blown back, a bloody rag doll.

He hits. Dead. Gun clatters away.

Back to regular speed.
Henessey rolls over, stunned. Samantha's staring at her hand, wondering how in hell it just did that.

HENESSEY
Jesus wept..!

Samantha retrieves the fallen Uzi.
They scamper to their feet.
Come hurtling out into a hallway --

A spray of GUNFIRE from around the corner. Wood flies. Splinters and pops. Another burst, this one BEHIND them.

Henessey swears. Shoves her into a STAIRWELL.

HENESSEY
Upstairs. Only way.

He surges upward, Samantha in tow. Stairs below, POPPING WITH GUNFIRE. They clear the first landing. Out of range.

HENESSEY
They're not stopping, they're coming after us.

SAMANTHA
No shit.

HENESSEY
Jesus, I'm scared. Hurry up and think of something.

They race out into the third floor corridor. Scoot around a corner, temporarily hidden.

SAMANTHA
Hit me.

HENESSEY
What?

SAMANTHA
Hit me, it makes me go into my thing.

He slaps her once.

SAMANTHA
<u>Harder</u>.

He slugs her. She sprawls across the floor. Gets up, rubbing her jaw.

SAMANTHA
I'm pissed, anyway. How many shots you got?

HENESSEY
One.

SAMANTHA
I got a clip. Last stand, let's do it.

They crouch, waiting...

A GRENADE

Bounces around the corner.

SAMANTHA
Fuck it. Run for your life.

She grabs Henessey and they BOLT down the side hallway. Toward a huge third story WINDOW at the end. Plate glass.

Samantha's eyes CHANGE. Suffused by a sudden, dead cold:

SAMANTHA
Give me the revolver.

HENESSEY
Are you nuts, that's a three-story drop!

Samantha takes the gun. Fires once, BLAM-! Spiderweb FRACTURES in the window.

SAMANTHA
Full speed.

They hit the window at a dead run.

The grenade DETONATES. Shatters the hallway. Blows it to splinters.

FLAME, rushing at them, hungry --

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Sam and Henessey burst through the window.

An EXPLOSION of glass. Flying, out into SPACE..!

The building VOMITS FLAME directly behind them.

Three stories up, some might be daunted by this little detail. Samantha is already unlimbering the UZI.

The two of them. In freefall. Sam spins the machine gun and STRAFES the ground below.

Sharp SPURTS of snow. Kicked up like dust. Bullets raking the ground, CHOPPING --

SAMANTHA, finger on the trigger. Teeth bared, gun blazing. Tumbling in slow motion... Click-! Empty.

We hope Samantha lives, so we can ask her why she just opened fire on the planet.

Then it's all over. The two of them hit, boom.

And go THROUGH. Through the thick layer of ICE which Samantha just chopped up.

PLUNGE UNDERWATER -- Into the frozen lake, as

ANOTHER ANGLE

Glass and debris rain down. Sending up geysers of steam from the ice.

THEY BREAK THE SURFACE.

Hollering. Clawing their way out. CUT TO:

EXT. BUS STATION - ON THE RUN

Wet. Cold. They run like wild dogs as, behind them --

A HITMAN

Emerges from the bus station. Casts about...

There. He's spotted them.

They're screwed. Nowhere to hide, no cover, nothing.

He shoulders his rifle.
Draws a bead, locks on target --

Leaves his feet.

Takes to the air as a BLACK LE SABRE slams into him. Snaps his spine. Tosses him sky high.

The sedan roars across the lot. Toward Sam and Henessey.

NATHAN WINDEMAN

Shouts from behind the wheel:

NATHAN
Get in! Both of you, NOW!

They pile into the backseat. Nathan floors it. PEELS OUT. The wipers squeak to and fro, erasing the hitman's blood.

Samantha cowers. Back to herself. *There..!*
Next to a parked car -- a guy with an ELEPHANT GUN.

Dead ahead. She's looking down the barrel.

SAMANTHA
Oh, God, no more..!

The rifle BUCKS concussively. The car window SPLINTERS..!

Does not break.

NATHAN
Bulletproof.

Almost as an afterthought, he swerves slightly. CRUNCHES the gunman against the parked car. Shatters him.

His SCREAMING VISAGE goes by an inch from Samantha, he coughs blood onto her window...

Now they're on the open road. Doing 110 mph. Henessey is trembling; Samantha comatose. Both will freeze soon.

NATHAN steals a glance at the rear view mirror. Gets his first good look at Samantha. Reacts, stunned:

NATHAN
Charly. Jesus Christ, I don't believe what I'm seeing, you're so *fat.*

This is not what she expected to hear.

SAMANTHA
I'm... um, I mean... what?

NATHAN
What in pluperfect hell have you been *eating,* you look positively bovine!

Henessey's still back a few steps:

HENESSEY
WE JUMPED OUT OF A BUILDING!!

NATHAN
Yes, it was very exciting, tomorrow we'll go to the zoo. Shut up.

They squeal through a hairpin turn. Burn rubber.

SAMANTHA
You're Windeman.

NATHAN
Nathan Windeman. There. The fog lifts, eh? Look, if I talk in front of him, you may be asked to kill him later. Works for me, your call.

HENESSEY
WE JUMPED OUT OF A GODDAMN BUILDING.

NATHAN
Charlene, darling --

SAMANTHA
My name is Caine. Samantha Caine.

NATHAN
Yes, yes, you said that on the phone. Honestly, Charly, must I really point out to you the simple fact that the letters in the name SAM CAINE, when rearranged, spell out AMNESIAC? Your mind was missing a name, so it simply invented one that was an anagram of your current condition.

Samantha reacts, floored.

NATHAN
You taught school, history. You baked pies and built treehouses, ate too much and said you'd have food babies, am I close? Dammit, Charly, that was your cover! Your memory was gone, you got confused and you BOUGHT YOUR OWN COVER. This ridiculous Ohio housewife business, it's a fantasy, you *wrote* the bloody thing!

SAMANTHA
It's not a fantasy, *I'm in the fucking PTA*.

NATHAN
Then quit. You're an assassin for the United States government.
(beat)
I ought to know, I trained you.

Henessy is so shocked he's LAUGHING:

HENESSEY
Beautiful. Fuckin' beautiful.

NATHAN
The daydream's over. You went slumming with the rich folk. You were a chipper little housewife, it was darling. Now you're home. You're dirty.
(beat)
And someone wants you dead.

Up ahead, two BLACK LIMOUSINES are pulling together to form a roadblock. Suits carrying heavy hardware.

HENESSEY
Don't slow down.

NATHAN
Wouldn't dream of it.

He BLASTS THROUGH. Deafening impact. Spray of metal.

Samantha grips her head as though it's about to burst:

SAMANTHA
Listen to me. I'M NOT HER ANYMORE. It's over. I'm out of it.

NATHAN
Too late, Charly. You've been made.
(beat)
You're back in whether you like it or not.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - BACK IN OHIO - NIGHT

An insistant hand KNOCKS at the door. Sam's husband HAL opens it, stares out at the SHERIFF'S DEPUTY on his porch.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY
Evening, Hal. Sorry to bother you, but this here gentleman needs to speak with you.

HAL
Who is he? I'm eating dinner.

THE SILVER-HAIRED MAN

Who spoke with the President earlier steps forward, flashes a U.S. Government I.D.

SILVER-HAIRED MAN
It's urgent that I locate your wife. I'm a friend of her father's. She knows me, she used to work for me.

HAL
Who the hell are you?

SILVER-HAIRED MAN
Oh, I'm sorry. Forgive me.
(extends his hand)
Delighted to meet you. I'm Mr. Perkins.

On Hal's reaction we CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE - LATE AFTERNOON

Nathan has pulled over in a grove of pine trees while Sam and Henessey shed their frozen clothing.

He gives Sam his trenchcoat. Henessey scrambles naked into the heated car. Puts a newspaper in his lap.

NATHAN
Your father was in the British SIS, assigned to the Irish situation. After he was murdered in 1971, Perkins recruited you for Chapter, a black bag operation working out of the U.S. State Department.
(beat)
Fall, 1987: Chapter assigns you to track down a terrorist known as Pentecost. You never complete the mission, electing instead to die, of all things, despite clear orders to the contrary. And dead you remain until, without preamble, you re-emerge, eight years later and fifteen pounds heavier.

SAMANTHA
Would you lay off the weight?

NATHAN
I think we can safely assume Pentecost is aware of your resurrection and is attempting to reverse it, seeing as you may be the only one who can identify him. Damn, I can't drive around with a bullet hole in the windscreen.
(beat)
Listen, I hate to be a nervous Nellie, but is there any place we can stash this car and hole up for a few days?

IN SAMANTHA'S LAP

Her fingers unconsciously fiddle with something. Damp, crumpled. The NOTEBOOK. One address left... CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY - A DOOR OPENS

And a handsome, slightly weatherbeaten COWBOY surveys the motley crew at his doorstep:

A natty older gentleman in a cardigan sweater.
A knockout woman in a grey trenchcoat.
In the car, a naked guy holding a newspaper over his dick.

Samantha clears her throat:

SAMANTHA
Do you know me..?

Seeing her, his eyes go wide --

He locks her in a whopping BEAR HUG, shouts:

MAN
CHARLY, BABY!!

Spins her around, laughing. Henessey and Nathan exchange disbelieving glances.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nathan and Henessey, the latter in dry clothes, sit in the living room. Watch surreptitiously as, in the next room --

SAMANTHA emerges from a closet, resplendant in a holiday dress. Spins around for the strange man we'll call LUKE.

SAMANTHA
Oh, Luke, it fits perfectly.

LUKE
It should. It's yours. I never could bring myself to get rid of it.
(beat)
Look, is this America's Funniest Practical Videos or something? You're telling me you don't remember our relationship..? You pursued me for months.

SAMANTHA
I caught you and forgot you. Sorry.

LUKE
It's December, you'll remember.

As Sam giggles, Henessey ROLLS HIS EYES. About to puke. Gazing at Samantha in her Christmas dress. Hell, the poor guy's gone, he's infatuated.

LUKE
Hey, I gotta call some friends of mine, coming over later. You people, feel free to walk around, the lake is beautiful.

EXT. HOUSE - AFTERNOON

The house is actually an old converted MILL. Beyond it, frozen landscape stretches to the lakeshore.

HENESSEY and SAMANTHA walk side by side. She draws a deep breath. Relaxed for the first time in weeks.

HENESSEY
"Oh, Luke..." Feh. So you bumped pelvises with this guy back in the eighties?

SAMANTHA
He seems to thinks so.

HENESSEY
What do you think? Your kid, Cathead --

SAMANTHA
Caitlin.

HENESSEY
Yeah, whatever. Um, could he be the...?

SAMANTHA
I don't know.
(beat)
God, it's coming back. I know all these... little details about him, you know? Um, I know he's got a pin in his leg, car accident. I know he cuts his own hair. Hates Letterman. I know he sits down to pee. I know --

HENESSEY
Yeah, yeah, you're giving me a stiffy. Not just a good friend?

SAMANTHA
No... I know too many things.
(frowns)
Have you seen Nathan?

That's when the crack of GUNFIRE splits the air.

NATHAN

Is busily plinking branches off neighboring trees with a .9 millimeter Beretta. CRACK-! CRACK-!

The action slams back, empty. Nathan assesses the damage. Nods, satisfied. Speaks to the fast-approaching duo:

NATHAN
Hello, Charly. Sorry to have startled you. Just so you know, I've contacted a blatently illicit body shop and ordered us a car. Until it gets here, however...

(smiles tersely)
I intend to play watchdog.

SAMANTHA
Thank you, Nathan. If I'm ever attacked by a gang of trees, I'll gave you a call.

HENESSEY's in a pissy mood:

HENESSEY
Just how old are you, friend? Maybe I should hang onto the gun.

Nathan shoots him a murderous look:

NATHAN
Dear boy, I'm a crack shot, and I'm packing *three* guns, one shoulder, one hip, and one right next to Mr. Wally --
(pats his groin)
Where most patdowns never find it, as an agent is often reluctant to feel up another man's groin. I'm seventy-three, any more fucking questions?

LUKE appears in the doorway just then, says:

LUKE
Look, Sam and I are going to try our hand at skating --

SAMANTHA
He says I'm good.

LUKE
-- You're great, and meantime, why don't you two go on inside, sit down...?

HENESSEY
Thanks, I already peed.

Luke stares at him, oblivious. CUT TO:

EXT. LAKESHORE - TOWARD TWILIGHT

ON THE LAKE

Samantha and Luke are skating. Graceful as swans.

IN THE SURROUNDING MEADOW

Henessey and Nathan, watching them. Walking as their breath plumes before them in the winter chill.

HENESSEY
Tell you something, old man, that car better get here, 'cause I'm gonna swim home if I gotta spend another day with Miss Memory Loss. And the shit she *does* remember, ah, who can forget the glorious year when her drunk Mom made her a stringy rabbit for Christmas, gee, Ma, thanks a load, what'd she give her next year, a dead rat in a shoebox?

NATHAN
You're really quite fond of her, aren't you?

Busted. Henessey makes dissembling noises, mutters:

HENESSEY
Ah, what the hell are you talking about, she's married.
(a pause, then:)
Tell me about this Pentecost. He the one trying to kill us?

NATHAN
Pentecost is a munitions broker. Man without a face, veteran of Baader-Meinhoff and the Red Brigades. Is he the one? Could be. He's rumored to be based in the U.S. Doesn't travel much, they say. Too afraid of metal detectors, the poor sod's got a foot-long piece of steel in his leg.

At which point, Henessey stops. Frowns.

HENESSEY
Come again?

NATHAN
A pin, Mr. Henessey. A surgical pin.

He scuffs his shoe in the dirt. Eyes narrowed:

HENESSEY
Where the hell..? I know I just heard that somewhere, something about a...

His eyes widen:

HENESSEY
Oh, fuck.

Points to the lake:

HENESSEY
Nathan, that son of a bitch has one in *his* leg.

Nathan freezes, thoughts racing... swears violently:

NATHAN
The dress, Samantha's dress!

HENESSEY
What? What about it?

NATHAN
It fits her perfectly.

HENESSEY
He said it belonged to her.

NATHAN
Hers, yes, but that was years ago, she's put on weight, remember? She used to be a size four, if that dress is hers it *shouldn't fit anymore.*

HENESSEY
Fuck. Come on.

They take off for the lake at a dead run.

NATHAN
We walked right into it, it's him, he's our fucking Pentecost.

HENESSEY
The son of a bitch wasn't her lover, he was her target! That's how she knew so much. All the little details, hell, she knew, all right. She *studied* the motherfucker, she was gonna take him out!

OUT ON THE FROZEN LAKE

Luke leads Samantha in a graceful pirhouette. Starts to SPIN, round and round, face glowing...

Hears something. A RATCHETING noise, drawing closer, huh..? Opens her eyes. Wishes she hadn't.

A BELL RANGER HELICOPTER

Is descending over the lake. Inside, TIMOTHY shoulders a bolt action rifle, cooly professional, as

LUKE smiles at Samantha, says:

LUKE
Took 'em long enough.

WHIPS HER with a gun butt. Opens her scalp. Drops her to the ice like a broken doll.

CUT TO BLACK.

Black indeed. Deep. Empty.

Out of the darkness, we hear a NEWS COMMENTATOR. Voice scratchy. Indistinct. Far away or long ago....

A TELEVISION IMAGE

Fills the screen. Black and white. Grainy. The legend: BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND, over footage of a sidewalk bombing.

We're back in time, the year 1971. A crisp-looking BRIGADIER is speaking to the off-camera reporter:

BRIGADIER
...the bombing has been linked to the Ulster Volunteer Force, which, as you know, is the counterpart of the provisional IRA and the most violent of the Protestant Paramilitary groups.

An ANNOUNCER's face replaces him:

ANNOUNCER
Despite threats of reprisals, Brigadier Baltimore repeats that he will seek to cut UVF supply lines, especially from Tripoli, Lybia. U.S. President Nixon concurs that...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

A battered TV, volume turned low. Snoozing in a chair, a rumpled older man --

It's the BRIGADIER, the one we just saw speaking on TV.

A CALENDAR on the table identifies the date as June 23, 1971.

IN THE NEXT ROOM

Girlish decor. Pinups of rock stars. Clipped magazine photos of SUBURBAN HOUSES with lush green lawns.

A YOUNG GIRL is awake, dressed and currently stuffing two PILLOWS under a blanket. She inspects her handiwork. Human-looking lump. Turns, satisfied.

One last look at the WOODEN JESUS on the wall --
Creeps from the room. Past the sleeping Brigadier.
To the front door.

She checks over her shoulder. Nervous.

Taps out five digits. Shuts off the alarm. Unlocks the door. Slips out.

EXT. STREET - BELFAST - NIGHT

The boy's name is GREGORY. Sixteen, with a quick, easy grin. Huddled beneath a tree with him, the girl is gelatin.

GREGORY
You've never made it with a boy, then?

GIRL
There's nothing odd about it. I'm only sixteen.

GREGORY
Rubbish.

GIRL
What?

GREGORY
You're fourteen and not a day more. Here now, I'm right, you're blushing.

GIRL
Look, what if I'm ignorant? It's my father, we never stay in one place, I never meet bloody anyone.

GREGORY
Saw him on the telly. Think he'd kill me? I'm a nasty one, I am.

He slides a hand under her sweater. She stiffens, terrified and exhiliarated, as he gently strokes her nipple with a thumb.

GREGORY
You know what, I'll bet you've never even kissed a boy... now, have you?
(beat)
Aye, but you want to...

He leans in. She leans forward. A jerky, tentative duckling on the road to swan-dom.

Their lips touch.

Across the road, THE WINDOWS BLOW OUT in her father's flat.

She spins, scream caught in her throat --

AS ARMED MEN

Rush from the house. Through the door, the one she left completely unlocked. Stutter of SMALL ARMS FIRE.

She whirls on Gregory, dumbstruck..!

Realizes only then that the son of a bitch is LAUGHING.

GREGORY
Thanks for shutting off the alarm, you bloody Papist bitch.

He slaps her full across the face.

GREGORY
Tell the press the Ulster Force claims full credit.

He spins and flees.

INT. BRIGADIER'S FLAT - MOMENTS LATER

Girl, moving. Walls racing past, shot to PIECES, run run run into her bedroom and LURCHES to a stop, screaming:

GIRL
DA!

Propped against the wall. By the bed.

He's still alive. Incredibly.
There's blood everywhere, his face chalk-white --

The man has DRAGGED himself in here.
He refused to die, simply couldn't, you see...

Not until he'd reached his daughter.

ANGLE ON BED

Two pillows, jammed beneath a blanket.

The Brigadier just stares at them. His face slack. White and ghastly.

Shifts his gaze to his daughter. Tears running from his dulled eyes.

BRIGADIER
How much....

He raises the pistol to his head.

BRIGADIER
...did they pay you..?

He fires.

On a young girl's dissolve into insanity we

FADE OUT.

BLACK. Empty. Silence like a tomb.

FADE IN:

INT. BASEMENT OF OLD MILL - NIGHT

Waking is slow.

Samantha opens her eyes. Blinks.
Hazy. Out of focus.

Tries to rub her eyes. Can't. Hands. Something's wrong, what the hell'd she do with her hands..?

Ah. They're stretched over her head. BOUND WITH CORD.

Suddenly she's very awake.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The basement of the old converted mill. A drafty, windswept place full of old, broken timbers.

A river runs through it. A stream, at any rate. The waters are still and frozen now. Above the stream --

A GREAT WOODEN WHEEL

Dominates the space. A corollary of the big wheel outside. Mounted on the same axis, creaking and popping with age.

SAMANTHA is tied to that wheel.

Lashed to its SIDE, affixed to it like a wooden goddess to a Greek sailing ship.

Now the bad news. The ice has been chopped away so the wheel can TURN...

And if it turns it will plunge Samantha UNDER THE FREEZING WATER. Beneath the ice.

Bound hand and foot. Strapped to the wheel, wearing only a nightgown. She is utterly helpless.

And she is not alone.

THE MAN KNOWN AS PENTECOST

AKA Luke, is giving instructions into a walkie-talkie. He signs off. Looks up at Samantha.

Seeing her eyelids flutter, he tosses her a cheery wave. Adopts his heartiest cowboy demeanor:

PENTECOST
Well, howdy there. If it isn't the forgetful spy. How you feeling?

SAMANTHA
Not-so fresh.

Samantha struggles against her bonds. No dice. Subsides. Takes a look round at her predicament. Frowns:

SAMANTHA
Uh... This is different. You get points for originality.

PENTECOST
Thank you. I'm glad you like it.

SAMANTHA
I'm kind of nervous, is this a torture thing?

PENTECOST
Torture, yes. The torturing of beautiful women, albeit politically incorrect, is a downright addiction with me.
(beat)
A woman never looks quite so beautiful as when her face is distended in pain. Witness the beauty of childbirth.

SAMANTHA
Please, I'm getting all misty. Look, untie me, I'll make any face you want.

PENTECOST
Let's not, and say we did. Do you smoke?

SAMANTHA
Not for eight years.

PENTECOST
Good. You'll last longer.

He walks over to a RED BUTTON set into a wooden beam.

PENTECOST
Mrs. Santa Claus? Hysterical. Hell, I'm waiting for the punchline, right?
(beat)
I send a team after you, heavy hitters. Here's the fucking punchline: <u>You</u> <u>took</u> '<u>em</u>.

Samantha's freezing, it's fifteen degrees in here. The wind howls through the cracks.

PENTECOST
Which leads me to believe your amnesia's not as real as everyone thinks. And little darlin'... I'd like to know if my identity's safe. You follow?

SAMANTHA
Henessey, the old man... Where are they?

PENTECOST
None of your beeswax. Now hush yourself, and take a deep breath. We're gonna do the torture thing.

He hits the button. An electric WHINE --

THE BIG WHEEL TURNS

Samantha. Feet first into the water. Struggling. Arms stretched above hear head.

She plunges below the surface.

A new dimension in pain. Frozen, mind-numbing pain.

She WRITHES against the wheel. It's like a crushing VICE is ripping her limb from limb.

She opens her eyes, briefly.

Discovers she's not alone. A mere foot from her face --

THE BLOATED CORPSE

of the drowned NATHAN. Staring away and away. BLUE with cyanosis.

The wheel reverses itself. Creaks and moans, turning --

SAMANTHA BREAKS THE SURFACE

Gasping for air. Wheezing. Choking. The FREEZING WIND plasters the nightgown to her.

PENTECOST
Take all the air you can, that's right. If you need to vomit, do it now. Okay?

Samantha, eyes cold and dead. Coughs. Wheezes.

PENTECOST
Shhhhh. Listen to me now: who knows my identity, aside from yourself?

SAMANTHA
No one knows. You're safe.

PENTECOST
I don't feel safe.
(sighs)
Look, tell me the straight dope and I'll shoot you in the head. Nice and quick. Otherwise, you're in for a long night. That's it, them's the rules.

She looks at his handsome, clean-shaven face and scowls:

SAMANTHA
Oh, come on, now, honey. You're a red-blooded boy. You can sit there with a straight face and tell me you don't want to fuck now and torture later?

He shakes his head, makes a "tsk tsk" gesture. Smiles grimly as he turns his attention to the red switch.

PENTECOST
Hate to see you like this, Charly. I heard you were a helluva spy once.

SAMANTHA
Watch your back. I'm not done yet.

PENTECOST
That's a very funny joke. You're an entertaining woman. Good night.

He hits the button.
She plunges beneath the surface.

Pentecost walks over to one corner.
Sits down. Takes out a pipe. Lights it.
Picks up a book. Reads.

And reads.

UNDERWATER

Sam THRASHES and jerks, to and fro.
Dead Nathan, mocking her.

There, under the water, the memories come...
Come flooding. Stark and vivid.

MEMORY FLASH - THE YEAR 1987

THE TRUNK OF A CAR opens, revealing a patch of night sky. Mostly obscured by two familiar individuals --

One's MR. BARNES, remember him? Few years younger. One eyeball heavier.

The other's TIMOTHY. He looks in the trunk. Nods.

TIMOTHY
Okay, I'll signal Pentecost. Your money will be waiting. And Barnes, do yourself a favor, man, do her and dump her, I'm serious. Don't get cute, try to play doctor first, capisce? I made that mistake once.

The lid SLAMS SHUT.

BACK UNDER THE WATER

The world a rushing MADNESS, memories unspooling now, faster and faster --

MEMORY FLASH:

A CLIFF overlooking the ocean.

Darkness. Rain.

Our heroine (for it is unquestionably SAMANTHA we are looking at) is lying unconscious atop a rocky bluff.

Lashed by wind-driven rain. Drenched.

BARNES produces a SYRINGE from a leather case. Rolls up her sleeve. Starts to administer the injection. Stops.

He can't resist... Can't help LOOSENING the buttons on her flimsy shirt... skin glistening wet... nipples visible...

Her eyes snap open.

And before it even registers, she's grabbed the hypodermic and plunged it deep INTO HIS EYE --

Then she's up and running.

Along the cliff, toward the car...

Barnes, HOWLING in pain, stumbling ...
Draws his gun and shoots her. In the head.

She pitches backward. Tumbles from the cliff...
Rushes headlong toward the waters below.
Getting smaller and smaller.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT OF OLD MILL - PRESENT DAY - NIGHT

She breaks the surface. Gasping for breath.

SHRIEKS, a sound ripped from her by the PAIN, the COLD --

By her ruptured sanity.

She hangs there. Drenched. Half frozen.

PENTECOST can't help it. A chill dances up his spine, watching...

She is not afraid. She is not whimpering.
She is looking directly AT HIM.
With a sick smile.

CHARLY
Pentecost... Make you a deal... Let me go now..? I'll leave you the use of your legs... Bargain, trust me...

Pentecost struggles to recover his poise.

PENTECOST
Who knows who I am, WHO HAVE YOU TOLD?

Charly's eyes bore into his:

CHARLY
I let you touch me, cowboy... I think I need a bath.

Pentecost stabs the red button. THE BIG WHEEL TURNS...
Into the water goes Charly. Going down for the third time.

UNDER THE WATER - HELL - SAME

Here we are again, in the world of silence and blinding PAIN.

Despair and madness but now there's something else --

Now there's RAGE.

It takes losing most of the FLESH from her right wrist...

But she frees the hand. WRENCHES it loose.
The water turns soupy red around her.

GROPES, blindly. Fingers NUMB, so fucking cold --

Breath, running out. No air. NO TIME.

She darts her right hand forward.
Toward the obscenely bobbing CORPSE of Nathan.

Does something utterly grotesque:

She jams her hand DOWN THE CORPSE'S PANTS.

And, it's there, right where he said it would be. Right next to Mr. Wally.

She extracts the hideaway gun.

PSP-25. Semi-auto five shot. Steel jackets.

She waits. Rage inside her. Death in her hands.

MEANWHILE, BACK ON THE SURFACE

The wheel CREAKS. Groans. The terrorist in the western boots watches her emerge, face first --

She comes up firing.

The first slug takes him in the knee. Blows it to scraps. Pure white shows there, then red creeps in.

He collapses, howling.

Shifts her aim. THE RED BUTTON. No hesitation. BLAM-! Hits it DEAD ON. Stops the wheel. Incredible.

Doesn't blink. Unties her captive hand. BLOWS TO SPLINTERS the wood surrounding her feet.

Leaps to solid ground, as

ANOTHER ANGLE

Pentecost looks up from his prone position. In agony.

A vision from Hell approaches:

A fiendish blue-skinned woman in a sodden nightgown. Blood leaking from one wrist. Ruthless speculation in her eye.

She has risen, REBORN, from the icy waters.

PENTECOST
Samantha... Please..!

CHARLY
Who's Samantha?

She shoots him in the other knee. He HOWLS.

Gun, empty. She tosses it aside.
Snatches up a Kalashnikov assault rifle, turns a circle, gun up.
Waiting on retaliators.

Kicks open a DOOR, gun up --
Frowns, not comprehending what she sees:

PIPES, LOTS OF THEM.

Suspended above an odd metal CRADLE, now empty.

Below, CANNISTERS. Various unidentifiable compounds.
Unidentifiable because the lettering on them's in ARABIC.

She disregards it. Shoulders the rifle. Crosses to Pentecost in her freezing nightgown, kneels and says:

CHARLY
You see it in the movies, badguy says, "Talk to me and I'll let you live." We're gonna run a variation, it goes like this: Talk to me..? I'll let you die.

She blasts an elbow.

CHARLY
Where's Henessey..?

EXT. OLD MILL BUILDING - NIGHTTIME

His SCREAM echoes on the night wind, seemingly for miles...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SKY ABOVE OLD MILL - DAWN BREAKING

A HELICOPTER comes throbbing in across the nearby lake.

INT. CHOPPER - SAME

TIMOTHY stares, slack-jawed. Utter disbelief:

The farm is gutted. Smoke, pouring. A combat zone, after the battle's over...

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - PATIO - DAY

HAL sits overlooking the back yard. Local police look on uneasily as MR. PERKINS paces behind him, frowning:

MR. PERKINS
Having only just met you, sir, I won't pretend to judge your wife's teaching abilities. She has, however, provided the Claring County morgue with an impressive array of dead bodies.

HAL
You don't fucking know her, Perkins.

MR. PERKINS
I knew her father, sir, knew him well.
(reads from folder)
Charlene. Borderline personality. Paranoia. Mother deserted home, age four. Father murdered, Belfast, 1971. History of mental breakdown, suicidal ideation. Aggressive displays --

HAL
Yeah, I saw the press release. O.J. Simpson called, he's jealous.
(eyes cold as death)
You're not after answers, you prick, you're setting her up for an execution. Aren't you?

They lock eyes and neither one looks away...

INT. GOVERNMENT SEDAN - DRIVING - MINUTES LATER

A haggard Perkins in back. Seated with his AIDE. He listens to a cellular phone, rubs his eyes.

PERKINS
Yes, I understand. Keep me apprised.
(hangs up)
I don't believe it. The bitch finished her mission.

AIDE
Excuse me, sir?

PERKINS
Nine dead at a farm in New Jersey. Blew him out of the water. Fucking slaughterhouse.

AIDE
Pentecost?

PERKINS
(nods)
Crates, broken open. Hundreds of items, missing. She went shopping, stole enough ordnance to sink the fucking Bismarck.
(pounds his fist)
Goddammit..! Everything's in place, green-lighted. And now..? Who knows what she saw, what Pentecost told her.

He looks out the window at the rushing scenery.

PERKINS
If Colonel Baltimore gets wind of this lab rat business we'll all be grabbing our ankles, Harry. *Damn*. How hard can it be to make 115 pounds of flesh stop moving and making noise?

ESTABLISHING SHOT - ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY - NIGHT

There. Thank you, New Jersey, that'll be all. You can go now. Um, please.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - ATLANTIC CITY - NIGHT

Waking is slow for Mitch Henessey.

He swallows dryly. Blinks. Opens his eyes, stares at a nondescript ceiling. Hears water running. A shower.

Struggles to focus on his watch. He's not wearing a watch, he knew that... he's in BED. Naked. Chest swathed in bandages, what the hell..? He pokes them.

Jerks back his head, hissing in pain.

EXT. BALCONY OF SUITE - WITH HENESSEY - NIGHT

Henessey stands on the balcony, bare-chested. Smoking and staring off at the lights. We HEAR, supered:

HENESSEY (V.O.)
Dear Mom: I was tortured, now I'm in Atlantic City. 'Nuff said. I just woke up, I feel like they played a hockey game in my stomach and Beck sang the national anthem. There's a woman in the shower, I hope it's Samantha. She bailed me out, but I'm still scared. I remember... dead guys. Necks all wrong. Shit, maybe I'm next...
(beat)
I'd go without a ripple, that's the truth. Ex-con. Ex-husband. Expired. Thanks, Ma, for hiding the truth from me for so long. Or maybe you believed in me. I miss you. I hope you believed, even for a day. No one did, Ma. No one at all. It's cold here. I'm sorry you're dead. Your son, Mitch.

During this, Henessey goes inside. Drenches his smoke at the bar. Flicks it in a trashcan. Starts to go, stops --

Frowns. Reaches into the trash.
Plucks from it a tiny scrap... A PHOTOGRAPH.

It's a picture of Hal and Caitlin.

Henessey is disturbed. He turns, regards the bathroom door. The shower has stopped. He slips the photo in his pocket.

He crosses to the bathroom door.
Raises a tentative hand. Starts to knock -- It OPENS.
There, in a thin silk robe, is a WOMAN, swabbing at her hair..

She breezes out of the bathroom all chipper, like nothing's unusual. Notices Henessey cursorily. Raises a finger: "one sec." Lowers her head and shakes it like a terrier, spraying him.

He cannot stop staring.
It's Samantha, it *has* to be...

Now she's BLONDE, though.
Hair clipped short. Bobbed.
Eyes a deep jade, altered by contact lenses.
Blood-red fingernails.

Then she smiles... And it's *not* her, not Samantha.

Amnesia's over, we got a brand new player:
Meet CHARLY BALTIMORE, government assassin.

CHARLY
Hey, Mitch. Glad you're awake. Uh-oh, you're seeping.

She grabs a washcloth. Frowns, says:

CHARLY
Here, look at this.

With that, she opens her robe and exposes her breasts. Henessey perks up considerably -- then SCREAMS as she RIPS the gauze from his chest. She cinches the robe again.

HENESSEY
Ah, that hurt like shit!!

CHARLY
That's why I distracted you first.
(dabs at his wounds)
Same principle as deflowering virgins.

HENESSEY
Same as -- virgins, what..?

CHARLY
Read about it. You bite her on the ear. Right as you... well, enter. Distracts from the pain. You ever tried that?

HENESSEY
No, I slug 'em in the jaw and yell "pop goes the weasel," what the fuck are you talking about? Who are you??

CHARLY
Name's Charly. The spy. Nice to meet'cha. Hungry?

INT. RESTAURANT - BOARDWALK - EARLY EVENING

Henessey watches, fascinated. All the little mannerisms, the differences. Shaking out a match. Running a hand through her hair. Chewing her lower lip.

Not Samantha. He clears his throat, grimaces, says:

HENESSEY
She's gone. Jesus. Samantha, she just... went south.

CHARLY
Thank God. Look at my inordinately large ass, look what the bitch did to me. Have you been following what I've been saying?

HENESSEY
Yeah, yeah. Um, are you sure about this stuff? Your memory's back, you know the whole ballgame?

CHARLY
I know the peanut vendors. I'm serious, Mitch, we may be targets. Chances are they've put a hit on us us.

HENESSEY
The peanut vendors?

CHARLY
Chapter. They're crooked, they're in bed with Pentecost.

HENESSEY
You're losing me. Chapter's our State Department. Pentecost is an arms broker.

CHARLY
Exactly, and Chapter's had his name and number since '87, had eight years to bust him, and they've done *nothing*. My bosses, they never wanted me to kill him, they were looking to *find* him, wanted to make contact.
(tugs at her dress)
They're still working with him, Mitch. Well, okay, he's dead, but before he died, Pentecost confessed he had a deal up and running with Chapter.

HENESSEY
What was the deal?

CHARLY
He bled to death before he could say. I did see part of it, though.

HENESSEY
(shakes his head)
Swell. Any more happy news? Anybody else looking for us with bazookas?

Charly shrugs and flashes him a DAZZLING smile.

CHARLY
Nope. Just them.

EXT. DANCE CLUB - PAY PHONE - NIGHTTIME

Henessey hunches forward, speaks rapidly into the phone:

HENESSEY
... That's what I'm *telling* you, Trin, this lady's whacked, she's lost it and I want fucking out, now *call the Feds*. Look, she's moving us tonight, I'll try to find out where. I'll sneak out to this phone, call you back at midnight.

He hangs up quickly. Charly lounges a foot away, watching him. He scowls:

HENESSEY
All right, Ms. Caine - forgive me, Charly. What did that accomplish?

CHARLY
If your office is tapped, someone just traced your call. Hang by this phone at midnight, we see who shows up to kill us.

He heaves a sigh. Sits down against the brick wall, shaking his head. Finally looks up and says:

HENESSEY
What do we do for two hours?

INT. BOARDWALK DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

She can stop traffic. Air traffic.

Red lips, fingertips. Lush hips. Dancing to the Pips. She ebbs and flows. Rapid-fire gyrations. Music THUNDERS.

And poor HENESSEY wanders the dance floor, under a sign which proclaims YULETIDE LAMBADA CONTEST - TONITE!

A couple sways past him, hips grinding.

HENESSEY
GET A ROOM.

He walks up to Charly. Watches her dance. She flashes him a grin.

HENESSEY
Who's the goober you're dancing with?

CHARLY
Aurelio.

A curly-haired goober, Aurelio pumps his hips, eyes closed.

HENESSEY
His pants are so tight I can see individual veins on his testicles.

CHARLY
It's his work with the homeless that intrigues me.

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY BOARDWALK - NIGHTTIME

CARNIVAL RIDES, dead for the winter. Henessey and Charly stroll beneath them. He smokes. She nurses a beer.

He takes a good long look at her, still can't fathom it.

HENESSEY
"Charly." fucking unbelievable.
(beat)
Shame about the fat ass. I bet you were really attractive once.

CHARLY
Oh, I was. Check this out. One time? A guy said he'd fuck me.

HENESSEY
No.

CHARLY
Swear to God.

She takes an exaggeratedly sexy swig of beer, as women are wont to do.

CHARLY
Yep. And you know something, he was really crazy about me. I know because he, like, came..?

HENESSEY
Dead giveaway.

CHARLY
Absolutely. Oh, and afterwards? Oh my God, afterwards I said the most funny thing, you know what I said..?
(beat)
I said, "Go back to your room, Dad..."

She takes a swig of beer. Laughs:

MEMORY FLASH: Belfast, Norther Ireland. Charly's bedroom as her FATHER puts the gun to his head and fires, CRACK...

CHARLY
It's why he thought I had him killed.

Henessey huddles, watching her closely.

HENESSEY
Your father was murdered.

She nods, gazes out over the icy waters. Speaks, her voice faraway and gone:

CHARLY
When he died, I went to his funeral. 12 years old, today I wouldn't. And I overheard a woman, she was praying... She was thanking God - sounded so happy - thanking Him it hadn't been her father who was killed. See... she didn't really care that God had let someone die... just so long as it missed her.
(beat)
... and she bought her cross at the same store as mine, see, that's what we do, we all pray to the same cross on a hundred different walls, and sit back and wait to see who gets hit and who gets missed.

Anger flares in her eye. Like a stirring of mud at the bottom of a deep, deep pond.

CHARLY
Fuck the waiting. Fuck being afraid. I determine who gets hit, and how hard. And I thank no one. It's pathetic to thank someone who spares you -- when they're just taking someone else.

Henessey stares, TRANSFIXED by her energy.

She turns... And there, in the biting wind and salt spray, she conjures him a sad smile.

CHARLY
This is my first date in eight years, Mitch. Is this a fun date..?

She crosses to him. Takes his hand. Places it on her thigh. Clings to him in the bitter cold. He sighs:

HENESSEY
Whoa. I don't get it.

CHARLY
What's to get?

HENESSEY
Oh, for Chrissake, I'm an ex-con. I'm broke. I got roaches the size of migrant workers, they fight over my bed. I wear a shiny suit, a bad tie, and the last time I got blown candy bars cost a nickel. Why me?

She grabs the back of his head. Engulfs him. Violent kiss. Withdraws, breathing hard.

CHARLY
Why not..? You can't tell me you didn't enjoy that.

Henessey flips something up before her eyes. Like a gambler displaying a trump card.

HENESSEY
Would they?

It's the picture of HAL AND CAITLIN.
Charly reacts like a vampire smelling garlic. Swats it away.

CHARLY
Get that out of my face.

Henessey lets out his breath. Nods slowly, says:

HENESSEY
I knew it. That's why you'd fuck me. To kill a schoolteacher. Bury what's left of her, bury it good and deep.
(nods to himself)
I knew that, see. Had to be. Only reason the most beautiful girl I ever met would... ahh, shit.
(beat)
Offer declined, lady. You're married.

He walks away toward their hotel.

HENESSEY
Oh, and call your fuckin' kid, will ya'? It's two days to Christmas. And she's under the mistaken impression that Mommy gives a shit.

Charly reacts, stung:

CHARLY
I didn't ask for the kid, Mitch. Samantha had the kid, not me, NOBODY ASKED ME.

He doesn't look back. CUT TO:

INT. FIRST METHODIST CHURCH - OHIO - NIGHTIME

The First Methodist Church's embarassing annual Christmas pageant, the finale of which is sure to be a rousing chorus of "Why are we Methodists?"

HAL and the local SHERIFF watch, grinning dopily...

MEANWHILE, BACKSTAGE AT THE PAGEANT

Two dozen tiny ANGELS prance and cavort. Moms look on, beaming.

In the corner, CAITLIN is practicing her angels' flight. Turning slow pirhouettes.

A SET OF IMMACULATE PANT LEGS

Prowls through and among the angels. Slow, unhurried -- Caitlin looks up just in time to see TIMOTHY reach for her.

The chloroform takes effect immediately.
Then he's moving, child tucked neatly under his arm.

ONE NEARBY MOTHER

Has seen it happen. Steps forward, bracketed by her three children. Opens her mouth to SCREAM --

Timothy palms a SWITCHBLADE.
Presses it to the kidney of her youngest child.

TIMOTHY
Wanna be a statistic, lady? You're about to have 2.4 children.

Freezes her. Mouth open like a fish.

TIMOTHY
I know where you live. Shut up. Merry Christmas.

He heads out the door of the vestibule. Into the night.

EXT. SIDESTREET - ATLANTIC CITY - NIGHT

CHARLY on a foggy street. Striding rapidly. Arms crossed, muttering under her breath:

CHARLY
She's dead, she's staying dead. Guy's full of shit.

That's when a tall, lithe BEARDED MAN steps from a nearby doorway. Crosses toward Charly, falls in alongside her. Horrendous Cajun accent:

BEARDED MAN
Well, you all upset about sumpin', ain't you, sister?

Charly can't help it. She snorts laughter.

CHARLY
Uh... yeah, bro. How's Mom?

BEARDED MAN
I see me a good-lookin' lady, walkin' all upset, all alone..? I think, Lord, yet another woman hasn't felt good lovin.'

CHARLY
Sorry, you're out of luck. I'm saving myself 'til I get raped.

BEARDED MAN
Oh, you sassy. Quick, like, you know? Let's us go on back to this alley, you tell me some good ones.

His hand edges out of his windbreaker with a snubnosed .38.

BEARDED MAN
I ain't askin', I'm tellin'.

Charly stops walking. Regards him the way you or I might look at a telephone cord.

CHARLY
(sighs)
Oh, don't even tell me... Goddammit, you're early, you're supposed to be at the pay phone. Typical. What a week I'm having, friend, you don't know. I mean, forget the fucking terrorist. Hell, I owed him anyway. Chew 'em up, spit 'em out, that's me with terrorists. But NOW. Now I got Chapter's butt boys tooling around New Jersey, and this I need like a fucking root canal, you follow, I mean who's next? The Y fucking Indian Guides, for Chrissake? Hang on, I gotta spit out a terrorist.
(spits)
Sorry. Anyway, what I'm saying, pretty soon it's gonna be one of those Benny Hill things, people chasing after me and I'm tapping the little bald guy on the head. Want some gum?

Her assailant stares, mouth working soundlessly. Unable to comprehend why his .38 caliber wand isn't working. Cleverly, he retorts:

BEARDED MAN
Lady, I have a gun!

Which is precisely when a much larger Smith and Wesson COCKS next to his ear:

VOICE (V.O.)
This ain't no ham on rye, pal.

HENESSEY holds the gun rock steady in his big fist. Charly spins on him, eyes flashing:

CHARLY
What the hell are you doing here?

HENESSEY
Saving your life. Woulda got here sooner but I was thinking up the sandwich line.

CHARLY
You think I couldn't take him? Idiot, you probably scared the other guy away --

HENESSEY
What other guy -- ?

CHARLY
Hit teams, nimrod, they go in pairs, were you always this stupid or did you take lessons?

HENESSEY
I TOOK LESSONS.

The hitman watches, bewildered. Considers waving to get their attention. Finally he can't stand it. Blurts out:

BEARDED MAN
Hey!

Charly snaps her head toward him:

CHARLY
What?

BEARDED MAN
I still got this fucking gun!

She smiles sweetly.

CHARLY
No, you don't.

Takes it off him. Just like that.

He stares dumbly at his empty hand. Half of his trigger finger is missing. Bone portrudes.

BEARDED MAN
SHIIIIT!!

Charly flips the gun into the air.

Launches a SPIN KICK. Shatters his jaw.
Catapults him backwards.

Completes her spin, catlike --

Catches the .38 on its way down. DOESN'T STOP THERE. Arm out, gun cocked --

Fires straight at HENESSEY, holy shit..!
He DIVES for cover as

BEHIND HIM

AURELIO takes three in the shoulders. Blown to tatters.
Charly drops the hammer again, BAM-!

The disco king staggers, SPUN by the shots, arm outflung...

The KNIFE meant for Henessey arcs through the air.
Imbeds itself in the ground an inch from the prone detective.

He stares at it with shocked eyes.
Aurelio hits, still alive. Twitches.

CHARLY. Lowers her arm slowly. Gun barrel smoking.

CHARLY
Fuck you. Just fuck all of you.

EXT. HELICOPTER - NIGHTTIME SKY

A CHOPPER BLASTS BY over the shimmering lights of Albany, New York.

INT. CHOPPER - SAME TIME

PERKINS huddles over a powerful transmitter. Speaks into a headset mike:

PERKINS
Two dead. She's moving, people. Target has been alerted, repeat, target is alerted. Do not try for a close kill, avoid her by a radius of fifty yards, surround if possible. Any macho creeps in the audience, disregard what she looks like, you can't fuck her without entering her kill zone and you'd have better luck with your Aunt Sadie, trust me. Colonel Baltimore is a survival engine, she's the Energizer fucking Bunny and she'll *find* a way to live.

(beat)
And, uh, watch out for the detective too, he's... got a gun, I think.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - SAME TIME

Henessey is leaning against a wall, fighting not to heave.

HENESSEY
For Christ's sake, Charly, he already told you he's from Chapter, he doesn't *know* anything.

CHARLY is poised, thoughtful, over the bleeding form of Aurelio. He squirms on the pavement, dying. She sighs.

CHARLY
Aurelio, what the hell good are you, huh?

Runs a hand through her hair, thinking -- snaps her fingers:

CHARLY
Give me the name of the last person they had you kill.

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY STREET - NIGHTTIME

A BRONCO ROARS UP out of a parking garage. Swerves and plunges into the maze of streets that inspired the world's most popular board game.

INT. BRONCO - SAME

Charly drives, focused. Intense.

CHARLY
It's a long shot. But if we can find out why they aced this Doc Findlay... maybe we get a line on the covert op they got running. Gives us a bargaining chip.

HENESSEY
Great. You think about that, I'll look for roadblocks.

CHARLY
Easy, Spike. I made it out of Beirut once, I think I can make it out of New Jersey.

HENESSEY
Others have tried. The entire population, actually.

CUT TO:

A WINDOW BREAKING

As a HAND reaches through and works the latch.
The sash slides up --

And CHARLY BALTIMORE comes up and through, silent as smoke.

INT. PLUSH, WELL-APPOINTED OFFICE

Throw rugs. Standing lamps.
Diplomas on the wall, someone's a doctor.

With professional detachment, she begins to search.

Methodically. Eyes ticking back and forth. Missing nothing.

Rifles the desk. Looks into closets.
Over and under, sideways, down. Quick, sure movements.

EXT. RED BRICK BUILDING - DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

HENESSEY is staked out down the street.

YOUNG KIDS play hockey on the ice of a nearby POND. He watches them wistfully. Eats a sandwich and keeps a weather eye on

THE LIT SECOND STORY WINDOW

Inside of which, CHARLY continues to search --

And promptly gives it up. Flops in a chair.

CHARLY
Gimme a break, Doc, why'd they kill you..?

Next to her head, a Girl Scout calendar. On the 28th, in red block letters, is the legend: GRACE'S B-DAY. TRACTOR PULL!

CHARLY
You lucked out, Grace...

She stands. Signals Henessey from the window.

Starts to leave. STOPS.

Her eyes has caught something... a PACKAGE, bulky manila envelope. Lying with the day's MAIL.

Addressed to DR. JOSEPH FINDLAY.

She grabs the package and holds it up next to the girl scout Calendar. Red block lettering.

The writing is identical.

CHARLY
Son of a gun... Mailed a package to yourself, Doc... now why the hell'd you do that..?

She opens the envelope. Sheaf of papers. Some photos. Pulls one at random --

Draws a sharp breath. We only get a glimpse, but it's enough:

A black and white glossy of a severely deformed BABY...

CUT TO:

INT. GOVERNMENT ISSUE SEDAN - DRIVING - SAME TIME

Three GOVERNMENT AGENTS. Faces drawn, haggard. Pit-stained shirts, day old sandwiches. One examines a photo of CHARLY.

AGENT #1
Fuck the Findlay coverup, man, put me on the trail of *this* wench. Hell, I'd eat a mile of her shit just to follow it back to the ass it came from.

AGENT #2
How come these chicks that hate men, every time you look around they're fucking? Seems like you hate men, you'd ease off on the fucking, that just me?

AGENT #3
Ah, chicks think it's cool to fuck and then pretend nothing happened. It makes 'em modern or some shit. "Sure, I came like I was turnin' into the fuckin' Wolfman, but it was my choice, I used your dick, it coulda been an umbrella, what was your name again?" Fuck chicks.

They pull up at an intersection on a downtown street.

Utter a collective sigh. Sit there at the red light eating sandwiches.

They don't realize they've pulled up next to Henessey.

Everyone sits. Drumming fingers on upholstery. Henessey looks over. Flicks ashes, looks back.

They all eat sandwiches together.

Agent #1, turkey on wheat. Looks over. Looks back. Frowns.

Henessey, glowers at him. "Yeah, you got a problem?" Looks away.

Realization hits everyone at once.

Henessey snaps his head back around:
BADGUY goes for a gun, still chewing --

Henessey shoots him in the neck.
He hasn't put down his .38 since Atlantic City.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

CHARLY's head whips around, hearing the GUNSHOTS.

CHARLY
Dammit..!

EXT. ROADWAY - SAME TIME

Henessey STAMPS IT.
Peels out.

SHRIEK OF TORTURED RUBBER

Government guys, right behind -- The chase is on.

INT. GOVERNMENT CAR - DRIVING - SAME TIME

Pandemonium. DEAD AGENT, bobbing half out the window.

AGENT #2
The machine gun, set up the fucking gun!

AGENT #3
I'm on it, Goddammit, get the windows!

The driver hits a button. Up go the windows.
All, that is, except the passenger side window --

Because the dead guy's bald HEAD is blocking it.
Becomes WEDGED there. Bald pate exposed to the world.

HENESSEY

Snaps off three quick shots --
Discovers the goverment car is BULLETPROOF.

At which point, A GUN PORT opens on the chase car:

Out comes a machine gun muzzle.

HENESSEY
Jesus wept.

The gun opens up.

EXT. RED BRICK BUILDING - BACK WITH CHARLY

No time to think. She's out the window.

It's two stories up, she doesn't care, drops, HITS --

Comes up running for the POND. Arms pumping. Legs pounding.

THE HOCKEY PLAYERS

Look up in time to see a crazy lady bolting out onto the ice. GRABBING THEM, one by one, scanning their feet:

CHARLY
Not you. No. No. No, get away from me. No, fuck off... hey, YOU.

She points to a kid with five-alarm acne.

Draws a Beretta and sights down the muzzle.

CHARLY
Skates.

EXT. ROAD - BACK WITH HENESSEY - HOT PURSUIT

The machine gun VOMITS FIRE.

Rakes the land rover, STRAFES it.
Blows off huge raw chunks of CAR.

Henessey, swerving madly, pedal to the metal --
Death run. He's not coming home, not this time.

CHARLY BALTIMORE

Hurtles forward. A blur.

CROSSING THE POND

Toward the speeding cars. Long, coltish legs. To die for.

Scans the situation -- chase car, bulletproof... Big bald HEAD, riding shotgun, that's interesting.

CHARLY
This is gross, this is gonna be so fucking gross...

Goes SIDESLIPPING at superhuman speed.

Tacks alongside the government sedan. Targets the bald guy's head and FIRES.

We needn't go into it, here or onscreen. Suffice to say, the car's driver is liberally SPRAYED --

Right across his EYES..! Icy roads, speeds over fifty --

He loses control. SKIDS OUT.

Rear gunner TUMBLES from the car, saving his skin as

ANOTHER ANGLE

The sedan catapults off the road --

ONTO THE ICE.

Slides right toward Charly, *still doing fifty.*

She doesn't miss a beat:

LAUNCHES herself, twisting in mid-air...

Up OVER THE HOOD of the car.
It sails by underneath her as

ANOTHER ANGLE

The incredible part.

In slow motion, she does a DOUBLE AXEL PIRHOUETTE.
Above the hood.

Mid-spin, she blows THREE SHOTS through the windshield.

Kills everyone. Keeps going.

THE CAR, fishtailing --
Spins twice around, PLOWS to a halt as

CHARLY SPINS

Hits a picture perfect landing a la Nancy Kerrigan.
Tacks gracefully. Arm up, gun out --
Tracking the car for survivors.

None? Good. She turns and heads for shore.
Like a swan, if they had guns.

And confronts one more slight problem:

HENNESY'S A HOSTAGE:

The rear gunner's got a knife at his throat.
Bruised and bleeding, the agent smiles at Charly and says:

AGENT #3
Okay, just take it ea --

She BLASTS him. Her flies backward dead.

Decorates Henessey with a single drop of flung blood.

And there it is.

Six syllables, the shortest hostage crisis in history, as Charly calmly lowers the gun and says to Henessey:

CHARLY
Hear me roar, babe.

CUT TO:

INT. SPEEDING BRONCO - DRIVING - DAY

Charly looks him up and down for damage.

CHARLY
Are you fine? You're fine. Listen up:

Lights a cigarette.

CHARLY
I think Findlay was a whistle blower, he was gonna leak some information and Chapter snuffed him.

BRONCO
Do you have the information?

Charly points to her purse. Henessey reaches for the PACKAGE --

There is a short, CHIRPING sound. Abrupt. Seemingly from nowhere. Charly frowns:

Reaches in her purse -- Oh, shit, it's the CELLULAR PHONE.

Back in Ohio, the number her DAUGHTER was to call.
Charly taps ashes. Waits. It rings again...

CHARLY
It's Caitlin. You answer it.

Stares straight ahead.
Uneasily, Henessey fields the call:

HENESSEY
Hello..?

Listens for a long moment... goes dead pale.
Holds the phone out to Charly. Voice unsteady:

HENESSEY
It's for you... and it's not the kid.

Charly takes the phone, puts it to her ear:
A VOICE, then... Clipped, terse.
As though its owner's got things to do elsewhere.

TIMOTHY (V.O.)
Your kid, I have her. You interested, or should I move on?

Charly is a statue.

Hand gripped tight on the phone.
She licks her lips, speaks without inflection:

CHARLY
Verify you have her.

INTERCUT - TIMOTHY ON PHONE - MOTEL ROOM

In slanks and tank top, the blonde assassin perches on his bed. Watching Montel Williams.

TIMOTHY
I got this number off her cast. Right below Mommy loves you... picture of a panda. Shit, maybe it's a dog, I don't fucking know.

CHARLY
Verify she's alive.

Charly hears a door opening. Sound of footsteps... then CAITLIN'S voice, coming over the wire:

CAITLIN
Mommy..?

CLOSE ON CHARLY

Dead still. Made of glass.

Swallows, says:

CHARLY
I'm here. Are you... are you injured?

CAITLIN (V.O.)
(crying)
Mommy... I want to come home... You said I could see my best friend, remember..? Watch Police Heat, remember, Mommy..? Please, I'm scared, come get me I'm scared, Mommy please HELP ME..!

Timothy snatches away the phone:

TIMOTHY
I want $750,000, roughly the sum you cost me by assassinating my employer. Large bills, non-consecutive.

Then his voice becomes soft and personal:

TIMOTHY
If you don't love the kid, this next won't matter. I think maybe it will. I don't get the money, Charly, I'm not gonna kill her. I'm gonna blind her and ruin her knees. She can ride around on a little cart, I'll even throw in the tin cup.

CHARLY
You're dead, motherfucker. We don't involve families. It's not the way it's done, we don't take families.

TIMOTHY
Goodnight, Charly. I'll be in touch.

He hangs up.
And there it is.

Charly puts the phone in her purse. Deep breath. Fumbles out a cigarette, lights it. She already has one lit.

HENESSEY
Charly --

She punches the windshield. SPLINTERS IT.

CHARLY
My kid... Bastard took my kid.

EXT. PINE-COVERED MOUNTAINS - UPSTATE NEW YORK - MORNING

Set back from the mountain road, a lonely MOTEL.
A neon sign - DEER LICK MOTEL.
No vacancies.

The sign sits atop a rusty pole. Blinks forlornly.

INT. MOTEL - SAME TIME

CAITLIN DRIFTS OFF TO SLEEP, as a set of manicured HANDS pulls the blanket up to her chin.

VOICE (O.S.)
There you are... snug as a bug in a rug.

MR. PERKINS

Hunches over the bed. TIMOTHY replaces a syringe in its case.

TIMOTHY
This is a big taboo for you suit types, isn't it? Forbidden fruit.

Perkins looks thoughtful. Paces as he says:

MR. PERKINS
As Charly may have mentioned, there exists in our trade a certain prejudice against involving families, it's... well, it's just not done.
(frowns)
If, however, a known terrorist such as yourself chooses to ignore these unwritten mandates... what am I to do..?

TIMOTHY
She's got two days to get my money.

MR. PERKINS
I wish you'd worry about your current assignment for *us*.

TIMOTHY
I'll ship your fucking chemicals, don't piss yourself. But after that I want Charly's cash.

MR. PERKINS
Then please feel free to set up a ransom meet, and I'll be there with bells on. You get your all-important fucking cash, I get Colonel Baltimore.
(smiles)
But before I write myself off as a complete ogre --

Perkins reaches into his briefcase and brings out a BABY DOLL. Sweet, innocent. Frilly with lace. A bright red bow.

MR. PERKINS
The young one will have a doll to play with on Christmas. Very popular item. It... well, it pees. You put water in it and... oh, fuck you.

EXT. TURNPIKE - NEW YORK STATE - DAY

Charly driving and chain smoking. Eyes forward, flicking back and forth. Missing nothing. An automaton.

CHARLY
Look, don't give me shit. I'll get the kid back, period. End of story.

HENESSEY
What are you gonna do, pull $750,000 out of your ass?

CHARLY
I got seven hundred in offshore accounts.

HENESSEY
What about the fifty?

CHARLY
Out of my ass. Point's moot, we're not gonna wait to hear from him.

HENESSEY
We're not.

She taps the steering wheel. Brow furrowed. Says:

CHARLY
Ever watch Police Heat? They always leave clues. Over the phone, gun to their head. So Caitlin says, "I wanna see my best friend." Stressed it.

HENESSEY
Girl's name?

Charly points to an overhead sign: ALEXANDRIA BAY - 5 MILES.

CHARLY
Alexandria. I'm thinking maybe she saw the signs and recognized her friend's name there.

HENESSEY
You're high. How do you know it's not Alexandria, Virginia?

CHARLY
I'm a fucking optimist.

EXT. WOODED AREA - ALEXANDRIA BAY - LATE AFTERNOON

The Bronco has been stashed well back into the brush. HENESSEY sits cleaning his recently fired .38, as CHARLY appears, says:

CHARLY
Lucked out. Clerk said a guy matching Timothy's description came down the mountain road last night. Bought supplies... and a coloring book.

He stares, incredulous. The crazy hunch actually paid off.

She reclines on a rock, allows her body to go slack.

CHARLY
Now we wait until dark.

HENESSEY
(frowns)
What if he comes back to the store? Aren't you worried the clerk will shoot off his mouth?

CHARLY
Everything's a trade-off, Mitch. You're in a fight, sometimes you gotta offer up your shoulder, just stick it out there, Guy jumps on it, gets so excited he leaves his knee open. Shoulder heals quicker, you follow?

Pause, then:

CHARLY
I gave the clerk an injection and left him in a drain culvert.

Henessey throws up his hands. He should be used to it by now. Charly continues, thoughtful:

CHARLY
Anyway, the girl's alert, that's good if we gotta extract her. Didn't sound sedated, we need her on her feet.

HENESSEY
Eight years old, still hates monster movies, dammit..! Must be scared shitless.

CHARLY
Fear can be an asset.

HENESSEY
Hey, whoa! Not so emotional, I'm getting embarassed with all these outbursts here.

CHARLY
Want me to cry on command? I can do it, asshole, and what fucking good will it do? We're planning an extraction and she's the target.

A pause. Then Henessey nods. Laughs:

HENESSEY
Funny. Chuck the icewoman, what'd you kill, nine back in Jersey..? But lady, when you went off that cliff eight years ago, maybe it went south. Water closing in... did you see anybody, down in the dark..? Maybe she came to you under the water, little kid, saying how'd it come to this, we were so pretty and perfect, now look at us, sinking with our head all open. Musta been pitch black down there, freezing... and at the end there she was, that's who you turned to in the dark, I'll bet. The little girl who smiled and loved rabbits and didn't know Daddies hid in closets... and she wanted to be Samantha when she grew up, didn't she..?
(beat)
He taught you it was hopeless... you were tainted, you were dirty.
(beat)
So now, your little kid, hey, she's a target, God forbid she's your daughter, God forbid you're *worth* something to someone.

She stares, speechless. Considers killing him.

CHARLY
You son of a--! What would you now about it, *any* of it!

His voice is coarse, hard. He leans in close, whispering:

HENESSEY
About feeling worthless..? I'm standing talking to my son and all I can think is I got fucked in the ass by three guys. Merry Christmas, kiddo, here's a ball glove, did you know Daddy screamed when they did him twice a week? Yeah, lady, I got a clue. You get hit and hit, the cross on the wall does dick, and finally you figure you deserve what you're getting, yeah, I'm with you.

He understands... and he doesn't hate her.

Charly can't take it. She SLAPS him, hard.

He won't flinch. Regards her strangely. Sadly. Turns his attention to a pack of Luckys. Fishes out a light.

And then she's rolling him over, mouth pressed to his. Legs going round him... Shirt coming off...

He looks up at her green eyes, shining in the dimness.

Under a canopy of branches, twilight falling.

CHARLY
I got days, Mitch, maybe hours... they're gonna shoot me to pieces.

The tiny, sad smile... she kisses his neck, butterfly soft.

CHARLY
This is the last time I'll ever be pretty.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - ALEXANDRIA BAY - NIGHTTIME

Patchy snow on the ground, occaisional drifts. A TANKER TRUCK rumbles up the mountain road. Under a starlit sky.

Jounces over a bumpy dirt track -- pulls up before the DEER LICK MOTEL. Lone sign, blinking forevermore.

MEN IN DARK GRAY SUITS

Wield flashlights, motioning the truck toward

THE GARAGE

A corrugated tin shelter, about 40 by 50 feet.

Men in BLUE JUMPSUITS operate cranes, maneuver a glistening FILL TANK into place beneath the roof.

EXT. SURROUNDING MOUNTAINSIDE - SAME TIME

In the distance, as the tanker enters the garage --

CHARLY BALTIMORE

Drops into frame. Lands and rolls, cat-quick.
Comes up behind a scrawny pine.

Welcome to the extraction.
No more fun & games. Tonight it's a survival-zero operation.

Scans through a pair of Zeiss Nightvision binoculars --

POV CHARLY: The gray-suited men. Flashlights roving.

HENESSEY appears at her elbow. Lugging the ordnance bag.
He sees Charly lower the binoculars, head in hands.

HENESSEY
What's the matter?

CHARLY
They're here.

HENESSEY
Who?

CHARLY
Fucking Chapter, that's who. Timothy acting alone, Caitlin had a chance. Now..? She's dead meat.

INT. BUNKER - SAME TIME

As the tanker snorts to a halt, TIMOTHY emerges from a crude office, calls out:

TIMOTHY
Just up from Carbide?

A blue-suit nods:

BLUE-SUIT
South Carolina facility. Dumped fire retardant in Wheeling, she's running empty.

TIMOTHY
Clean her out. I mean like a whistle. No trace of other compounds when the shipment loads, capisce?

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - SAME TIME

Charly and Henessey. Kneeling. He speaks tersely:

HENESSEY
Got guards pacing a forty yard spread. Reporting on radio units. Every five minutes they give an all-clear, that's how much time you've got when you take one out. Before he comes up dead air.

CHARLY
Five minutes from the time the knife goes in. That's tight.

HENESSEY
I know. Let me go in.

CHARLY
Negative. You stomp around like a forties drunk and you're a lousy shot.

HENESSEY
I get by.

CHARLY
You couldn't hit a lake if you were standing on the bottom, now shut the fuck up.

(beat)
Here I go. Guards are on 27-1 megahertz, meet me at 26-9, you need to talk. As soon as you spot me with the kid, start blowing the charges.

Henessey nods. Shifts from foot to foot, awkwardly. Opens his mouth --

CHARLY
Don't say it.

HENESSEY
I was gonna say enjoy life, eat out more often.

She smiles.

CHARLY
Way I see it, we got an advantage. No one kills me right away, they always want to fuck me first.

HENESSEY
Good for you. What about me?

CHARLY
Okay, you can fuck me too. Pigs, every one of you pigs.

A pause, then:

CHARLY
If she's alive, she's coming out of there, Mitch. If she's not..
(eyes cold)
They'll know we stopped by.

She's gone, like a wraith. CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Charly, on the prowl. In and out of the trees...

BURYING C-4 CHARGES. In bushes. In snowdrifts.

She crawls to woods' edge, peers out --

POV CHARLY:

The motel stands solemn and bedraggled. Draws a sharp breath--!

There's a LIT CANDLE in the window of 17. CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL GROUNDS - SAME TIME

A gray-suited SENTRY. Poised on a wooded slope. He puts a walkie-talkie to his lips and says:

SENTRY
All clear.

CHARLY, out of nowhere. Lightning fast.

Hand, clamped on mouth. In goes the knife. Deep. He burbles blood. Drops.

Before he hits Charly's already tapped her WRISTWATCH: 5:00 and counting.

Shoulders his machine gun and moves off. Makes for the door of unit 17...

BACK WITH HENESSEY - MINUTES HAVE PASSED

Henessey lies prone, binoculars trained on the motel.

HENESSEY
Christ, lady, what are you doing in there, playing fucking mah-jongg? Move.

Behind him, a tiny, sharp CLICK-!

TIMOTHY

Has a Skorpion machine pistol aimed at his head.

The killer speaks into a radio unit, a single word --

TIMOTHY
Bogey.

From there, it all goes south.

POP-! go the Kleig lights. BRILLIANCE, blinding --

CATCHES CHARLY

Coming out of 17. Pins her dead to rights.

Unconscious DAUGHTER cradled in her arms.
Tiny DOLL cradled in the kid's.
Charly RUNS for her life.

Warning fire. The ground around her erupts like a SHELLBURST.

TIMOTHY, MEANWHILE

Shouting into his walkie-talkie, saying:

TIMOTHY
Take her alive, Perkins wants her!

Henessey watches, helpless and PANICKED, as

ANOTHER ANGLE

Charly tumbles BACKWARD.

Crashes through a CELLAR ACCESS, it splinters beneath her..!

Plunges into blackness.

INT. CELLAR - PITCH BLACK

She hits, cushions the kid. Grunt of PAIN.

THE DARKNESS EXPLODES

Into kaleidoscope FLASHES OF GUNFIRE, Charly strafes it all. Worms, mice, dogs, let God sort 'em out.

Then she turns on the lights:

BRICK WALLS. Graveyard for tools, old faded signs --

THREE TEN-GALLON GAS CANS

Which she's just managed to PERFORATE, good one, Charly.

The gas comes bubbling out in burps and splatters, drenching the floor. She gently sets her daughter on a workbench.

Casts about for an escape route.

There. Set into the brick wall, a huge steel DOOR. She flings it open --

MEAT LOCKER.

Nothing there, no help. Eyes darting. Possessed. There's always a way to survive, always...

A GRAVELLY VOICE

Wafts down from above, then. Deadly serious:

VOICE (O.S.)
I smell gasoline, you have a little accident..? I got plenty of matches up here. Bad way for a kid to go. Thirty seconds, think it over.

CHARLY stands in place, eyes closed, mind racing --

Caitlin's DOLL. Regards her dully. Plastic smile like it knows a secret. CUT TO:

INT. SECOND STORY UNIT - INTERROGATION SUITE - NIGHTTIME

A BRUTAL KICK

Sends Charly sprawling, nursing a cracked rib.

Truth is, she's looked better.
So has HENESSEY, sitting tied to a chair.
Charly spits blood, looks up at her tormentor:

She's looking at herself a dozen years ago.
Young. Splendid. Honey-blonde hair. RUTHLESS.

For the record, meet VIRGINIA, Timothy's liaison with Chapter.

VIRGINIA
Don't you fight me. I got your comatose little kid, don't you THINK about fighting me.

Kicks her in the head. Henessey snarls:

HENESSEY
Enough already. Knock me around, bitch.

VIRGINIA
Put your name on the list, there's a twenty minute wait.

From the back of the large room, TIMOTHY speaks.

TIMOTHY
Okay, Ginnie, cool it.
(to Charly)
Isn't she cute? Got the same spirit you used to have before you got fat and old. You don't walk away, Charly, not in your business. Gone eight years, Chapter wants to know who turned you.
(beat)
That's called a prompt, Colonel. WHO TURNED YOU?

Henessey growls:

HENESSEY
Nobody turned her, she got fucking amnesia.
(to Charly)
Colonel..?

TIMOTHY
I think it was the Chicoms. Was it the Chicoms? They're the new badguys, you know, them and the North Koreans.

VIRGINIA
Let's see what she had for dinner.

She kicks Charly in the stomach.

TIMOTHY
So nobody turned you. Just... settled down, that right?

CHARLY
It's... the truth... By the way, one more kick, I'll start to get pissed.
(beat)
So what's the plan, what's going out in the tanker?

Timothy looks at Virginia. They can't believe it. Both crack up laughing.

TIMOTHY
Oh, so now you're questioning me. I answer or you'll beat my associate in the foot with your head.

CHARLY
As many times... as it takes.
(beat)
Never mind. I'm not so young... I never heard of MKULTRA. I get the gist.

Timothy reacts, startled.

TIMOTHY
My, oh, my. *Good,* Chuck, excellent. Good old MKULTRA, the government's scramble for mind control. Didn't work for beans, went straight onto the CIA blooper reel, next to the Bay of Pigs' funniest moments. Unfortunately, they'd already managed to dope, poison, irradiate, and sterilize some of our finest mental patients.

CHARLY
Yeah. And Uncle Sam won't pay shit to them. No compensation.

TIMOTHY
Oh, it gets much worse. MKUKLTRA, cold war relic, they say..? *Nie weider..?* Bullshit, Charly. Went on during the Gulf War. College students, mental patients, even bar customers. Only this time..? Too many side effects, too close geographically. The worst of which --

CHARLY
The kids. Chemical damage, showing up in newborns.

TIMOTHY
Fine, you tell the story. What it is, they're coming out winged. Winged, interesting word, two syllables, not one. Anyway, there it is. And it's just gonna get worse. More babies. More cancer. Schizophrenia.

CHARLY
And you're all set to cover it up.

TIMOTHY
Chapter is, I'm just helping. See, we're creating a chemical spill, Chuck. A terrible accident, yes? But an accident nonetheless.
(smiles thinly)
You think compensating the victims is a problem now... Think how much Uncle Sam would be dishing out for deformed babies.

CHARLY
Timothy... Let my kid go.

TIMOTHY
Why? For old times' sake..?

Henessey looks up. Timothy meets his eye:

TIMOTHY
Oh, Colonel Baltimore and I shared a bed once. In Paris, no less. She was looking for Pentecost, I allowed her to seduce me, see, I should have just killed her right off..? But anyhow, I'm fucking her when suddenly I catch this *glint* off the lamp. Glint, I like that word. Steel needle, man. Under the pillow, she's moaning and groaning and out comes the needle, bitch tried to whack me.

Virginia chimes in:

VIRGINIA
Show them the surprise now?

Timothy shrugs. Gestures okay. Smiles benignly at Henessey:

TIMOTHY
Problem with being a hero... is all your cowardly friends get sucked in -- now ain't that the case, Trin..?

And with that, Virginia ushers in a handcuffed TRIN. Henessey's nail-filing secretary. Crazed with fear. Trembling.

HENESSY
Motherf-- Touch her, I find a way. Swear to God, I'll find a way.

TIMOTHY
There's an easy way, friend. Just tell me whose payroll you two bozos are on.

TRIN
Mitch, tell them... she had anmnesia, eight years, tried to tell them, Mitch, tried, *please make them believe it..!*

A tiny whisper:

TRIN
Please, Mitch, they'll kill me...

HENESSEY
I... work for Charly. She works... for no one. That's it. THAT'S IT.

Virginia nods.

VIRGINIA
That's it.

She shoots Trin in the head. The girl slumps, lifeless.

HENESSEY
COCKSUCKERS STINKING COCKSUCKERS..!

Timothy lights a cigarette. Studies Charly.
Around them, blood... mingled with the smell of cordite.

CHARLY
Little girl... don't... kill the little girl... *Look at her eyes...*

TIMOTHY
And why exactly should I do that..?

CHARLY
(spits blood)
Because they're yours, motherfucker.

She stares Timothy full in the face.

CHARLY
I got pregnant. The little girl's your fucking daughter.

Dead silence in the room. A pause...
Then Timothy brays LAUGHTER. Hooting.

TIMOTHY
Priceless. Can't believe it...

Tears, streaming now.

TIMOTHY
My daughter. Bitch, you know how many kids I've bailed on? My luck, I'll probably marry one by accident, have fucked-up babies. Sit around, compare wings.

He's still laughing. Virginia shifts impatiently, says:

VIRGINIA
I beat her any more it'll start to show.

Timothy manages to bring himself under control:

TIMOTHY
Okay. What it is, Charly, they're gonna find you both frozen to death in the woods. Suicide pact.

Charly, fighting to contain herself.

CHARLY
She's no risk, Timothy, let her go.

TIMOTHY
The freezer's downstairs, Charly. Let's get it done.

EXT. MOTEL GROUNDS - NIGHTTIME

Timothy accompanies Charly to the cellar.
Flanked by two dyspeptic GUARDS. Both stay well back.

A POCK-FACED AGENT approaches briskly, RIFLE slung across his shoulder. Holds up a gray LUMP and several black stick-like acoutrements:

POCK
Found the last of the charges she buried. We're cool.

TIMOTHY
Give it to Ginnie.

He turns to Charly. Smiles thinly:

TIMOTHY
Well. There went that.

INT. UPSTAIRS INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME TIME

Henessey, receiving the treatment.
VIRGINIA kicks him relentlessly. He grunts. Doesn't scream:

VIRGINIA
Brave guy, I like that. Been there, done that kinda guy. Ever bunjee jump?

HENESSEY
No. You?

VIRGINIA
Kidding? I got the shit in the trunk of my Jag. Hey, we could -- oh, no, you couldn't, not with your wound.

HENESSEY
What wound?

She flicks a knife. Almost casual, but it whistles-! Sticks in his shoulder.

VIRGINIA
That one. Who do you work for?

He grits his teeth, sweating it...

INT. CELLAR - WITH CHARLY - SAME TIME

Charly enters the same CELLAR she occupied earlier. Timothy behind her, he wrinkles his nose in distaste:

TIMOTHY
Shit, this place is loaded with fumes, nobody light a fucking match. You check her for flammables?

GUN GUARD
(shrugs)
Checked her for colon cancer.

Caitlin is sitting in a chair.
Bundled in flannel, clutching her baby doll, the one Perkins bought for her.

She looks up at Charly dully. Sucking her thumb.

CAITLIN
Mommy...

Charly composes herself.

CHARLY
Shhhhh. Mommy's here, it's okay. Safe and snug... what comes next, huh..?
What's the next part?

CAITLIN
... bug in a rug... man with white hair... says the same thing you say...

Charly licks her lips. Easy, Charly, keep cool, she mustn't die afraid...

CHARLY
We're going to take a nap together, Cate. You can have your dolly, and Mommy will be next to you, how's that? It'll be like bears in the winter. When they get cold, see, they fall deep, deep asleep...

TIMOTHY
Bears, yeah, yeah. Enough.

He points to the STEEL DOOR of the meat freezer.
The guard opens it onto a gleaming silver CHAMBER.
Timothy calmly adjusts the thermostat. Sub zero.

The guard reaches for Caitlin's doll.
Charly snatches it back. Face etched in disgust.

CHARLY
You're murdering us both, cocksucker, let the kid have her fucking dolly.

He subsides, unable to meet her gaze.
At which point, Timothy tosses her the WOODEN BOX.

TIMOTHY
Chuck, I'm not a total creep. I'll make you a deal, okay? There's a knife in that box. Now, you and the kid, you're going to freeze, *but* -- if you kill the kid *by your own hand..?* I'll spare your husband. Serious. We're gonna open that door and you'll both be frozen solid, but if we see that you've cut her throat, I swear I'll go to bat for Hal. Whole thing still looks like a suicide pact, everyone's cool.

You don't want to ever be on the receiving end of the LOOK she gives him... Steps into the freezer, holding Caitlin.

As the door starts to swing shut, she flashes him her most DAZZLING smile:

CHARLY
We'll always have Paris.

The whole room lights up. She can do that.
She's still smiling when the door erases her from view.

Timothy watches her go. A chill dances up his spine.

INT. CELLAR MEAT LOCKER - SAME TIME

CHARLY crosses with Caitlin to the far corner.

CAITLIN
Mom, it's cold in here-!

CHARLY
Shhh. Just for a little bit. Polar bear, remember?

Moves. Quick. Methodical. Breaks open the BOX:
Sure enough, a hunting knife.

Without missing a beat, she crosses to the STEEL DOOR.
Kneels and begins DIGGING at the bottom edge.
CARVING into the brick.

Brushes hair from her eyes. Blinks. Sweating at sub-zero.

Why the hell is she digging?
Gonna crawl under the damn door? She's gone loopy.

Lying flat, she appraises her work --
A TINY NOTCH. Poked through to the other side.
The actual penetration to daylight: millimeters.

Then, she does two seemingly nonsensical things:

Crosses to Caitlin -- gently takes her DOLL from her, then:

CHARLY
Open.

Reaches in her mouth. Takes out her RETAINER.

Must be the temperature.

Crosses to the door again.

Kneels down.
Calmly, with infinite care, takes the retainer...

Inverts it, now it's trough-shaped.
Holds it flush against the tiny NOTCH she carved.

BABY DOLL, now. Holds it directly above the retainer. Steady.
Depresses the KNOB in its back:

It pees gasoline.

GAS, Trickling down the retainer, through the brick --
Into the other ROOM. Not much. Enough.

She stands.

DRAWS A TRAIL with the doll.

Crosses, dribbling, over to Caitlin.

Hands the doll back to her. What next..?

She grabs the hunting knife, that's what. RAISES IT HIGH --

One terrifying moment, is she gonna put it in the kid..?

Hardly. Brings it down on the FLOOR. Slams it down.

CHARLY
Gimme a spark... show me, show me...

Tries again. And AGAIN.

STRIKING, over and over. Floor RINGS with the effort --

CHARLY
Come on, come on... do it..!

But in the end, it's just not gonna happen.
Won't work.
Lets go a GROAN of despair:

CHARLY
All this, just one fucking match,
Goddamit..!

She collapses forward. Cradles her head in frustration.
There's a tiny tap in her shoulder.

CAITLIN
Mommy..?

Charly looks up, face haggard and depleted...
Caitlin's eyes, alive again. No longer dulled.

Kid reaches inside her CAST and brings out a pack of matches.

CAITLIN
Don't cry. I keep these here.
(beat)
For lighting your candle.

Charly stares, dumbstruck, at the tiny gift.

The bitterness, the self-hatred, all of it. Under innocent eyes on Christmas Eve it DETONATES, blown sky-high, and she sweeps up her daughter and cradles her, tears streaming...

CHARLY
I love you, Caitlin, oh God, do you know
how much I love you..?

Caitlin pulls back, looks flush in her mother's face.

CAITLIN
Am I gonna die..?

From a dark and cold place, Caitlin has led her home. Charly's eyes, like steel. A harsh whisper:

CHARLY
No, baby, you're not gonna die. They are.

She strikes a match.

INT. SECOND STORY INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME TIME

Henessey crawls, arm over arm, to Trin's corpse. Collapses, cradling her... Crying into her shoulder. Virginia SCOWLS:

VIRGINIA
You know what, Mr. Been-There-Done-That? You just lost me.

Smiling, she raises a knife. Eyes dead like a rat's --

Henessey jams Trin's nail file DEEP INTO HER LEG.

HENESSEYT
Been there. Worst prison in five fucking states, you learn a few tricks.

Virginia falls back, HOWLING as

INT. CELLAR MEAT LOCKER - SAME TIME

The flame hovers above the gasoline trail.

CHARLY
When I tell you, scream as loud as you can, or else your ears'll get hurt.

A tiny nod. Charly calmly touches fire to the fuel.

Cradles Caitlin to her chest, gently strokes her hair...

CHARLY
Hey, should we buy a dog..?

The flame races across the room. Hits the steel door.

And zip..! Vanishes through the NOTCH. Pause --

THE BASEMENT BLOWS SKY-HIGH.

Wooden walls, obliterated. Boards sheared. Atomized.

THE MEAT LOCKER DOOR

Blows inward like a cannon shot.
Holds to its hinges, buckled like JIFFY POP.

INT. UPSTAIRS INTERROGATION ROOM

SLOW MOTION: Henessey, running for his life. Pounding toward the window, dead run...

Virginia, screaming... Raises the KNIFE --

Suddenly LEAVES HER FEET, look of comic surprise --

As the wall behind her DISINTEGRATES in flame.
Henessey cries out, blinded as

EXT. MOTEL BUILDING

He's blown OUT THE WINDOW. Ejected SPRAWLING, lofting across the middle distance...

Blasts through the MOTEL SIGN, blows it to SPLINTERS.

Tumbles, end over end... lands, WHAM--! Atop the storage building's CORRUGATED ROOF.

Thirty yards downrange, a resounding BAM-! as

VIRGINIA

Lands atop the selfsame roof and sets it shuddering.

Lying still. One arm twisted crazily.

HENESSEY notes this, oddly detached, dizzy --
Promptly passes out.

The two of them. Lying splayed on the roof.

ANGLE ON VIRGINIA

Battered and scorched. A doll at a fire sale.

NOT DEAD.

Trembling, she digs in a pocket. Face, a mask of effort.
Whatever she's doing, *terribly* important --

Takes out a tiny black device --

VIRGINIA
To all a good night.

Thumbs the switch.

CUT TO:

A FLASH-CRACK--! Vivid and brief, as

BEHIND THE GARAGE

A section of earth vomits upward. Showers dirt.

WATER, UNCHECKED

Begins jetting in every direction. Line severed.

What the hell..? CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE - SAME TIME

THE BLUE-SUITS dash like ants as BLACK SMOKE rolls skyward outside their door. One of them on the tanker yells:

BLUE SUIT
I've lost water pressure!

His supervisor points to the overhead fill tank.

SUPERVISOR
Fuck washing it, load the shit and let's move it out, NOW, NOW!

EXT. MOTEL GROUNDS - TRAVELING WITH CHARLY - SAME TIME

She doesn't think. She SURVIVES. Second to second. Caitlin in tow, gripping her wrist. SMOKE everywhere.

THE POCK-FACED KILLER

Lurches out of the smoke, slashing with a KNIFE.

CHARLY
Run, Catey.

They collide with a mighty IMPACT. Down they go.

CAITLIN beats feet, vanishes into the smoke.

Charly, locked in struggle.
He's good. Better than most --

Still ends up with his head on backwards, CRACK -- !

Rips the AUTOMATIC RIFLE from his shoulder.

Now she's fishing in his coat. Pistol, good.
Cube of C-4. Even better.

Around her, billowing smoke. No sign of her daughter...

EXT. WOODS - NIGHTTIME

CAITLIN darts in and out of the trees. Frightened.

In the background, the MOTEL burns merrily.
Men rush back and forth wielding flashlights.

A RUMBLING, then... building, steadily.

THE TANKER

Comes trundling out of the garage. Belching smoke.

POV CAITLIN:

Attached to the left rear of the truck bed:
A bright yellow UTILITY BOX, roughly three by three by three.

As the driver idles, receiving last-minute instructions --

Caitlin abruptly BREAKS COVER.

Runs and climbs inside the box as, meanwhile

BACK WITH CHARLY - SAME TIME

Her mother. Crouched behind a BRIGHT RED JAGUAR.

SCANS through the rifle's Starlight Scope. Sweating. Intense.
We see the landscape, cast in ghostly GREEN.

CHARLY
Where'd you go, baby... show Mommy...

THERE SHE IS

Bingo, Charly watches through the scope as a TINY GREEN CAITLIN climbs into the box and shuts the lid.

ADJACENT TO TANKER

A nearby blue-suit has WITNESSED this. He looks around, stabbing a finger at the box:

NOSY BLUE-SUIT
Hey. Hey, you see that? A little ki --

A bullet slams him backward in a cut-string sprawl.

WITH CHARLY

She lowers the rifle. Nods grimly:

CHARLY
Smart girl, honey. Stay still. Don't make a sound. Snug as a bug in a rug...

BACK WITH HENESSEY - SAME TIME

Henessey comes to his senses. Darts looks all around him:

Virginia, lying dead still. Across the metal roof.
Next to her, a portable RADIO UNIT.

He duck-walks over to her. Snatches it up. Dials to 26.9 megahertz, ready to transmit when he notices SHE'S ALIVE.

Staring up at him with silent malevolence.

He taps her on the forehead:

HENESSEY
You still in there..? We win, by the way. Charly gets off this mountain, that tanker ain't going nowhere.

Virginia manages a weak SMILE:

VIRGINIA
... Good...

HENESSEY
(frowns)
Come again?

VIRGINIA
... No water... they couldn't... wash tank... left catalyst on... tank walls...
(coughs)
Fucking bomb, asshole... Chemicals react... go hot... fifteen minutes to Main Street... boom...

He gapes at her. Utter incredulity.

HENESSEY
Why? You fucking bitch, *why?*

She laughs blood.

VIRGINIA
Because I'm a double agent... stupid... No way, Chapter... covers this up...

He doesn't think about it. Snatches up her GUN.

HENESSEY
You're done.

Blasts her in the chest. Hits transmit on the radio unit.

EXT. CLIFFSIDE - HIGH ABOVE MOTEL - SAME TIME

CHARLY leaps from the red Jaguar. Darts along the cliff, sniper rifle slung across her shoulder.

Flings herself flat. Peers down at the grounds. Rifle positioned. Babysitting the tanker.

HEARS HENESSEY... Calling to her on the radio.

HENESSEY (V.O.)
Charly, you there? Hello, Charly.

Grabs the unit from her belt:

CHARLY
Mitch! I don't believe it. Listen, if you say, "Are we having fun yet" I'll rip your nuts off. Where are you?

HENESSEY
Roof of the big garage. Is Caitlin with you?

CHARLY
No, but she's safe for the moment, she stowed away on the tanker truck.

Henessey draws a sharp breath. Swallows, says:

HENESSEY
Bitch rigged the tanker, Charly, it's a bomb. We got fifteen minutes. No more.

On her reaction we CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROADSIDE - WITH TANKER AND EN TOURAGE

TWO PANEL TRUCKS sit, engines idling. Next to the tanker. Each truck's got a PHONY LOGO painted on its side --

A & P market, *Little Debbie* snack cakes, respectively.

Ramps are positioned so nondescript ESCAPE CARS can be backed up into the truck beds, facing outward.

MEANWHILE, AT THE BACK OF THE TANKER

A blue-suit puts a PADLOCK on the utility box as he passes. SNAPS IT SHUT.

BACK WITH HENESSEY - SAME TIME

He hears two flat CRACK-!s on the still air.

HENESSEY
Hello..! Charly..?

Even over the receiver, her desperation's apparent:

CHARLY
Tires won't pop, Mitch. Bastard just locked her in, she's stuck in there and they're leaving, *Goddammit!*

Henessey rubs his eyes. Takes several deep breaths, mind turning it over. He looks up. Tired. Haunted.

HENESSEY
All right, I'll go in and get her, you watch my back.

CHARLY
No chance. I make it twelve, Mitch, automatic weapons.

HENESSEY
So kill 'em for me, bitch, Christ, what are you good for?

He stuffs a fresh clip in the gun. Wipes away sweat.

HENESSEY
(to himself)
Piece of cake. You're having a really good day.

Closes his eyes. Gathers himself. Long pause...

HENESSEY
Go get her, boy.

He leaps from the roof and makes a death run.

Gun in one hand, radio in the other.

Swerving and dodging like a broken-field runner, CHARLY in his ear screaming:

CHARLY (V.O.)
Your nine, on your nine!

He spins, BLASTS AWAY, dead guy, pitching forward --

SMOKE, billowing, hard to see, making him COUGH...

CHARLY (V.O.)
30 degrees left, Mitch. Left.
(beat)
Your other left.

Stumbling, catching himself. Barelling forward.

CHARLY (V.O.)
Nix, nix, I can't see in there, don't do it, break right..!

He breaks right.

CHARLY (V.O.)
Fuck me, I was wrong, get outta there!

He staggers out of the smoke: TWO MEN, MP-5 machine guns.

Trained on his chest. He struggles to aim, too late --

Their heads pop. They die and fall in that order. Henessey shouts into the radio:

HENESSY
Gracias.

CHARLY (V.O.)
De nada.

UP ABOVE, ON THE HILL

CHARLY fires shot after shot.

Every time she squeezes the trigger, someone dies.

One shot. One kill. No such thing as wounded, we're talking St. Peter looks up from a magazine and says holy shit, it's the lunch rush at Kate Mantilini's.

BACK DOWN BELOW

The smoke clears and Mitch sees the tanker.

Right there, thirty yards away.
Yellow UTILITY BOX. No one in the way.

CHARLY (V.O.)
End run, Mitch, go wide!

He breaks for the truck.

CHARLY (V.O.)
No, Goddamn you, they got you flanked..!

Everybody fires a gun.

MITCH GETS HIT

Takes one high in the chest, SPINS him..!

UP ON THE HILL

CHARLY SPRAYS on full auto, DICES TO TATTERS the combat zone, extinguishing the gunmen, too little too late because

MITCH IS IN DEEP

BAM--! bullet takes out his right arm, fuck *you*, buddy, doesn't miss a beat, simply tosses the gun, flips it to the other hand and extends that arm and KEEPS SHOOTING, blows that fucker down and suddenly

HE'S RETREATING

Staggering like a lunatic, arms akimbo, spitting blood and into the trees he goes, and collapses, and HITS...

And lies very still and bleeds.

As ECHOES of gunfire die slowly, we HEAR:

HENESSY (V.O.)
Dear Ma: I'm looking at the ants, they're pretty great. Some really funny ants here, Ma. All these funny ants, think I'll stay and watch 'em awhile...

UP ON THE HILL

Aftermath... Charley's out of ammo. Flings aside the rifle. Helpless, so fucking *helpless*...

Sound, nearby. Building in pitch... reaching a *crescendo* --

A SCREAMING CHOPPER RISES BEHIND HER

Crests the cliff and hovers like the SWORD OF DAMOCLES.

INT. CHOPPER - SAME TIME

TIMOTHY, riding shotgun. Scans the cliff below:

Thick evergreens. Charly. somewhere among them. He sights down his rifle, takes careful aim --

BLOWS OUT TIRES on the Jaguar. Cripples it.

As the chopper BANKS, heading away, he grabs a cellular phone.

BACK WITH CHARLY - SAME TIME

In big trouble. MANY HEADLIGHTS, bouncing uphill toward her. Cut off, they've cut her off --

The other direction ain't much better:

A 200 FOOT DROP. Straight down.
Evergreen trees, far below. Power lines. Highway.

She hears the PHONE RINGING, then... inside the Jag. Crosses slowly. Reaches in, lifts the receiver. It's TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY (V.O.)
"Have yourseeeelf a merry little--"

CHARLY
Shut up and listen: Virginia rigged the tanker, it'll never make the spill site, it's gonna *blow up*.

TIMOTHY
(laughs)
Duh, you stupid broad, I'm fucking in on it. The Chinks, they're paying me and Ginnie to take down Chapter. See, when that tank hits 312 degrees Celsius, Main Street's gonna look like a meteor strike. And when they start digging up blackened Barney dolls and kiddee skulls, Chapter *es finito*. But thanks for sharing.
(beat)
Enjoy your last stand, Charly, there's no way out. I'm gonna stay up here on the ceiling and watch. Out.

Charley drops the receiver... Turns, looks behind:

They're coming for her.

Woods filled with headlights. Backlit FIGURES. Ducking in and out of the trees. Getting closer.

The wind blows... bitter cold out here in the dark night of the soul. Nothing left. No hope. No reason.

Caitlin, dead.

The rage explodes in the form of a kick which SHATTERS the lock on the trunk. *Dammit*, she needs a fucking miracle.

At that moment, the trunk lid slowly rises, CREAKING...

Revealing all of Virginia's BUNJEE JUMPING EQUIPMENT.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - SAME TIME

The TANKER is rolling. Out onto the road, snorting and belching. Flanked by the two PANEL TRUCKS.

INT. UTILITY BOX - ON TANKER - SAME TIME

Poor little Caitlin huddles in the dark. All alone. ROARING in her ears. Sort of like being underwater.

EXT. TANKER TRUCK - CLOSE ON UNDERBELLY

A silver device attached to the skin of the tank.

INT. CHOPPER - WITH TIMOTHY

He consults a tiny, liquid crystal display on his watch. Red numerals. *178 degrees*. Nods.

He's holding a GUN to the pilot's head.

TIMOTHY
Sorry you had to hear that, but I can't have you warning the truck.
(sighs)
About now, I bet you're wishing I didn't know how to fly this thing...

EXT. CLIFF'S EDGE - WITH CHARLY

She watches as the PILOT is ejected and plummets from sight, kicking and screaming.

Gives it a cursory glance. Finishes sticking the wad of C-4 EXPLOSIVE to the bottom of the Jaguar.

Straightens. Turns around...

And stands dead calm as they all come out of the TREES, guns drawn... Raises her hands, see, boys..? No bang-bang.

Like backlit monsters, they approach, hulking. Matter of yards, now... She flashes a naughty little smile --

Goes backward off the cliff.

Rockets earthward, 200 feet of open air.

THE BUNJEE CORD

Pays out, FAST. Whipsaws out the door of the Jaguar --
Hooked by carabiner to the STEERING COLUMN and meanwhile

THE CHAPTER AGENTS

Rush forward, incredulous. Peer OVER THE EDGE:

Below them, a swan diver, BLACKNESS all around.

CHUNKS OF CLIFF

Blasted to bits, all around her.

Charly vanishes into the fog, beautiful as a poem.

INSIDE THE JAGUAR

The cord pays out entirely, goes TAUT --
Now it starts to STREEEETTCH outward, killing momentum as

CHARLY

Drops like a stone, whistling through space.
Feels it then, the DECELERATION kicking in, streeeetching...
Pulling TIGHT --

Hits a dead stop.

This is it. Cord, stretched as far as it goes.

She's still sixty feet above the highway.

No hesitation whatsoever. She thumbs the DETONATOR in her right fist --

Blows the car.

UP ABOVE -- CLIFF'S EDGE

The Jaguar goes up with a solid CRUMP--!

Blown off the edge of the cliff.
Along with a half dozen screaming AGENTS.

BACK WITH CHARLY - FALLING

Lifeline cut. 60 FEET above the road, no problem.

She does thirty feet in freefall.
Raises her left hand --

Slaps a carabiner on a passing POWER LINE.

Hurtles downward until suddenly, KA-CHUK--!
She LURCHES to a sudden stop.

Doesn't miss a beat: Grips a rope and GLIDES the last thirty feet, touches down lightly. Unhooks herself, turns as

A CAR

Throws a fishtailing SKID, just misses her. Driver SWEARS.
She raises her gun. Fires without blinking.

Puts a hole in the passenger side windshield and the DRIVER ain't sticking around, he's out the door and gone as

CHARLY THE EXTERMINATOR

Crosses to the car, face a stone mask.

Behind her the FLAMING JAGUAR SMASHES to the ground, raining fragments --

Followed by BURNING CORPSES, smacking the pavement one after another.

She doesn't even look. Gets behind the wheel.
Leaves most of her tires on the road behind her.

The watchword here, my friends, is "relentless."

EXT. MAIN STREET - ALEXANDRIA BAY - CHRISTMAS EVE

A plot to sap the ENTIRE U.S. ELECTRICAL SUPPLY using one maudlin church facade. The dazzling display so excites the PRIEST that he actually stays awake through the following:

PRIEST
... And the winner of the St. Isaac's Annual Bake-Off is... Oh, goodness, we have a TIE.

A SPECTATOR mutters:

GRUMPY MAN
Be still my fucking heart.

SANTA HEADS UP THE PARADE

Down Main Street, atop his horse-drawn SLEIGH. Waving as huge wads of SHIT emerge continuously from the horses' flanks. Children watch in abject AWE, the hell with Santa.

All in all, though, it's magical; no one thinks to tell the Grinch that when your heart grows three sizes you have coronary disease.

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME

The gleaming TANKER roars down a sidestreet.
Flanked front and back by the innocuous PANEL TRUCKS.

The temperature gauge continues to RISE: *203 degrees*.

EXT. HILLSIDE - SAME TIME

A CAR FLIES INTO FRAME, AIRBORNE... Hits offroad and plunges downhill. Traveling overland.

At the wheel, CHARLY breaks out the terrorist driving handbook and goes for broke.

Eyes ticking back and forth. Swerving. Dodging.

She cuts a SWATH through the pine forest, in and out at fifty miles an hour...

EXT. NIGHT SKY - OVER ALBANY BAY

A HELICOPTER BLASTS INTO FRAME. Skims the rooftops as

INT. CHOPPER - SAME TIME

TIMOTHY (with a new PILOT) barks orders into a mic:

TIMOTHY
All units converge. Divert local law, this is a government matter. Brook no interference, I want the the Baltimore woman eliminated. Out.

EXT. MAIN STREET - EDGE OF TOWN - SAME TIME

Charley runs a roadblock.
BLASTS into the intersection, doing fifty --

Someone put a Goddamn PARADE in front of her.

Hits the BRAKES..!

Fishtails into a mailbox. Sends it flying through a plate glass window.

Out of the car. Gun held low. A woman possessed.

CHARLY
Push it, you fat bitch..!

THE TANKER

Fifty yards ahead, belching smoke. Heading for an intersection, it's gonna make the light, *dammit* --

Sprints to a BLUE BOX on a pole. BLOWS THE LOCK and reaches inside, triggers a switch as

UP AHEAD IN THE INTERSECTION

The light turns suddenly RED --
No go, the TANKER squirts through. KEEPS GOING.

SCREECH of tires... The flanking PANEL TRUCK doesn't make it. Plows into a Buick. Horns blare. Shouts. Curses.

Chase car's out of the picture. She RUNS.

EXT. PARADE ROUTE - SAME TIME

SANTA CLAUS

Perches atop his sleigh, feeling like a rock star and wishing his groupies were legal... when suddenly he's got company.

CHARLY
Drive.

She shows him the automatic. Sits down. FIRES A SHOT in the air, echoing CRACK-!

THE HORSES

Decide a little faster wouldn't hurt.

INT. PLUSH GEORGETOWN OFFICE - SAME TIME

MR. PERKINS hunkers forward, face slack, as a VOICE issues tinnily from his headset mic:

VOICE (O.S.)
... with Santa Claus, correct, er, excuse me, the individual *playing* Santa, er... they're pursuing the tanker truck, sir.

Perkins stares straight ahead, speechless.

EXT. HIGHWAY - HEADING OUT OF TOWN

SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE TANKER. Horses at full gallop, hooves in pounding frenzy.

CHARLY

Tries to jump from one to the other. As she tries to LEAP, the tanker pulls away, widening the distance, and meanwhile

TWO GOVERNMENT SEDANS

Come whipping out of ALLEYS, fall in behind them. CRACK--! Gunshots, shattering the stillness.

CHARLY throws herself flat next to Santa.

CHARLY
Sorry, man. Government agents, high level conspiracy.

SANTA
Fuckin' government.

He reaches under the seat and produces a Savage 30-30. Box of shells. STARTS LOADING.

CHARLY
NRA?

SANTA
Thirty year member.

CHARLY
God bless America.

The SEDANS jockey for position, try to pull ABREAST -- CHARLY veers back and forth, won't let them through.

She hands the reins to Santa.

CHARLY
Veer left.

SANTA
You sure?

CHARLY
In five seconds I'm gonna own that fucking truck.

Santa complies. PEELS OFF to the left --

Opens a TWELVE FOOT chasm between sleigh and tanker.

Government car, rushing to fill the gap, BINGO..!
Coming ABREAST of them, driver aiming a Mossberg shotgun out the window --

Five seconds:

Charly Baltimore LEAPS from the sleigh, lands atop the government car.

Skips lightly across it, casually BLOWS TWO SHOTS through the ROOF.

Down through the metal. Drilling into their heads. Driver and passenger, killed instantly --

As Charly hops nimbly from her 50 mile an hour STEPPING STONE --

Across to the tanker. Dump-stuffs a new clip, as

THE CORPSE CAR

Now, fades from the race, whipping out of control. FISHTAILS away behind them --

Takes out the SECOND CHASE CAR, spray of metal.

Three seconds, and Charly's taken out two pursuers.

INT. CAB OF TANKER TRUCK - SAME TIME

The door flies open and the DRIVER sees CHARLY. Bloody. Demonic. Wisely leaps out, BOUNCES from view...

Charly snags his hat as he goes by. Plops it on her head. SWINGS UP into the drivers' seat, double-clutches -- pours on the steam.

Five seconds. She owns the tanker.

BLASTS forward into the lead PANEL TRUCK. Slams the truck from behind, BULLDOZES it --

Sends it THUNDERING into a park bench. Glass sprays.

She owns the road.

On the seat beside her: an MP-5 machine gun. She's set.

Throws a NINETY DEGREE turn onto a sidestreet. Donates most of her tires to New York.

INT. SPEEDING TANKER TRUCK - ALEXANDRIA BAY - NIGHT

Charly's on fire. Senses heightened. Eyes tick back and forth like a machine. Heading downhill, out of town...

CHARLY
Hang on, Catey.

She hits the brakes.
A flash of SPARKS..! A ripping WHINE, dies away --

The brake pedal is all play. Nothing.

She's in a runaway truck.

CHARLY
No, not fair, not fucking fair..!

Barreling onward. A lunging behemoth.

CHARLY
Can't stop, Catey, can't...

CHAIN-LINK FENCE

At road's end. Beyond it, a quarter-mile plunge.
Downhill over rocky terrain --

To the ST. PAUL CATHOLIC GIRLS' ACADEMY.

Looming stone structure, perched on the bay. Closed now.

Vast empty PARKING LOT.

Tears on her cheeks.

Lights a cigarette. Takes a long drag, exhales:

CHARLY
Suck my dick, every one of you bastards...

Blows through the chain-link fence.

SHUDDERS AND LEAPS DOWNHILL

Mud blows skyward. Trees, blasted to splinters.
Onward, a JUGGERNAUT, pitching and yawing...

They'll need a new hill, she's taking half of it with her.

IN THE CAB

Charly fights to contain the beast. "Fuck you," slyly retorts the beast. She BOUNCES and caroms off the sides like a mad pinball.
World, lunging crazily --

CAITLIN

Buffeted inside the UTILITY BOX. Cries out as, suddenly

THE TRUCK SMASHES DOWN

And all windows BLOW OUT concussively and the front tires go with a volcano CRACK-!
As the beast goes canting to one side, ponderous, MASSIVE...

It keels over on its side. Still doing fifty.

TRAVERSES THE PARKING LOT.

Slows itself by TAKING OUT LIGHT POLES, shears them off like saplings.

Charly is EJECTED from the cab. Slams to a halt on her stomach, rolls over --

FLINGS herself aside just in time, as a towering light pole SMASHES to earth an inch from her head, blows SPARKS..!

Concussion dies away. Silence. Echoes.

She lays beneath the hissing dinosaur.

TIMOTHY'S TEMPERATURE GAUGE

Is still affixed to the truck's underbelly: *234 degrees.*
Charly winces. Struggles to haul herself erect --

TIMOTHY KICKS HER IN THE HEAD.

The debonair assassin looms above her.
His HELICOPTER circles on high, waiting... CUT TO:

INT. PLUSH GEORGETOWN OFFICE - SAME TIME

PERKINS hears a garbled, pained voice over his headset:

VOICE (O.S.)
She's... incapacitated the truck... I'm damaged, sir, I believe I'm dying... Instructions..?

PERKINS
Continue dying. Out.

He sits down. Nearly misses his chair. Stares sightlessly. Loosens his tie, hits a button and says:

PERKINS
Ms. Helm, get me the President, please...

He takes out a bottle of Scotch. CUT TO:

INT. ST. PAUL CATHOLIC ACADEMY FOR GIRLS - NIGHTTIME

The saints are all gathered. PLASTER BUSTS in niches, keeping mute watch. A mammoth CROSS presides on high.
Dark in here. Hushed, cavernous...

Charly flies through a STAINED GLASS WINDOW.

Hits and SLIDES. Fetches up against a bannister, WHAM--!
She's beaten to shit.

THE DOOR CREAKS OPEN and in walks Timothy. Calmly shuts the door behind him. Consults his tiny gauge -- *297 degrees*.

TIMOTHY
Make it four minutes to detonation and chopper one's waiting, kiddo.

He sheds his coat. Stows his gun. Removes a SWITCHBLADE. Drapes the coat on the bannister. Flicks open the knife.

CHARLY
Only four inches..?

TIMOTHY
You'll feel me.

He approaches, almost casually.
Charly staggers erect. Adopts a killing stance.
Instinct. She can barely stand.

And they circle, two pros. Never watching the eyes, the eyes are liars, they look at the HANDS...

The gathered saints look on, neutral. Forming an ARENA.

CHARLY
She's only... eight... she's a beautiful little girl...

His concentration never falters as he says:

TIMOTHY
She's a shit-eating little whore-bag, she came out of *me*.

FIRST STRIKE -- Timothy LUNGES with the knife, she spins away, spins right into his whirling side kick, *yoko kekomou*, takes her high in the chest. CRACK -- !

The sound of Charly's rib breaking carries clearly. She rolls out from under, too slow, he gets hold of an arm and FLINGS her up and over -- She SAILS through space.

Twists in mid-air. Lands like a cat.
Almost.
Staggers forward.

They circle.

CHARLY
... Watch the tits...

TIMOTHY
... Give it up, your breathing's shot...

CHARLY
... Bite me....

Charly catches fire for three seconds: some people never have that much. LAUNCHES herself. Avoids a stab at her throat, fuck you, eats that for breakfast, spins, slams the knuckles of her right hand into Timothy's nose. Busts it. He snarls, comes back --

Drops and TRAPS her arm over his shoulder:

Charly just made a crucial mistake.

CRACK -- ! Arm, broken. She HISSES in pain, tosses three shots at Timothy, SNAP. SNAP. SNAP. Ribs, SPLINTERING as he drops the knife and then they're falling back. GASPING.

Circling again. Charly cannot walk a straight line.

TIMOTHY
It's called shock, Charly... Your body wants to go into to shock...

CLOSE ON CHARLY

She looks up at him then, from sunken eyes shot through with red... covered in blood and sweat... and in her eyes we glimpse it, the demon, and it's LAUGHING.

She whispers to herself:

CHARLY
(sotto)
You want a piece of me, bastard... here, take my shoulder...

She trips on purpose. Comes at him with a clumsy *toku-do* and HANDS HIM HER SHOULDER, all that's missing is the plate --

And WHAM. In goes the knife, cuts deep and Charly doesn't give a shit because sure enough, there's the bastard's KNEE, wide open...

Boot-strikes, BAM -- ! Shears the knee, pops the cap like a bottle top and Timothy HOWLS in agony.

Stumbles backward into the BANNISTER --

Grabs his coat and brings out the gun. CHARLY hisses:

CHARLY
Just you fucking die.

She rips the knife from her own shoulder and flings it.

Takes Timothy high in the chest. Bites deep.
Topples him back. BANNISTER, catches his weakened knee.

Up and over, flailing --
Drops from sight.

Before he's gone, however, the gun GOES OFF TWICE.

Blows a ragged HOLE in Charly.

She falls back. Stunned. Sits down hard.
Looks down at herself, oh, my God...

The saints take it all in stride. CUT TO:

EXT. GIRLS' SCHOOL - NIGHTTIME

The doors burst open and here she comes.

Trauma, severe. Shock, blood loss --
She makes for the tanker. For her kid.

Hitches. Staggers. Going on sheer guts.

THE HELICOPTER ROARS OVERHEAD

The PILOT brandishes his radio mic:

PILOT
Got her. Heading for the tanker, thirty yards out. She's all over the place, something's wrong with her.

WITH CHARLY

She's not running, she's falling in a straight line.

Reaches the tanker.

Staggers against the inverted truck chassis.
UTILITY BOX. Above her.

CHARLY
Cover you ears.

She raises Timothy's gun.
Fires. BAM-! Lock springs to pieces.

CAITLIN

Tumbles to the pavement, dazed and confused. Casts about --

CAITLIN
MOMMY..!

She springs to her feet. Comes running and flings both arms around her mother. HUGS HER.

That one puts Charly out for a few seconds.
PAIN, excruciating. Comes to her senses, swaying like a clothesline in a high wind...

CHARLY
Run... get out...

CAITLIN
Don't go away again, please...!

Charly hisses in pain. Grabs Caitlin's head.
Turns it. Facing the TEMPERATURER GAUGE.
Red numerals: *301 degrees*.

CHARLY
The truck's a bomb... gonna blow up,
RUN... I'm right behind you, go...

Caitlin hovers, torn. Charly summons a gutteral CROAK:

CHARLY
... Go and don't look back...

In the end, Caitlin relents. RUNS, out into the open...

Charly watches her go. Nods, satisfied.

Collapses.

Hits the cold tarmac and splays in a heap.
Breath wheezing in and out.
Already the pavement is staining red.

WITH CAITLIN

As, within ten seconds of the command, she promptly DISOBEYS her mother, looks back -- Stops dead.

There's a corpse underneath the truck.
It isn't moving.
It isn't breathing.

It's not laughing, or shouting, or baking or reading stories or even hurting, not anymore.

It's not. Period.

CAITLIN
Mommy, no..!

Bomb forgotten. Danger forgotten.

Her tiny arms pumping. Feet slapping pavement.
She returns to her mother.

First she tries shaking.
Grabs one knife-bloodied shoulder, oblivious of the wound.
Jerks back and forth. Frenzied.

CAITLIN
It's okay, I'm sorry I left, please wake up, come on please...

CHARLY. Cheek against the pavement.
One lifeless eye STARES. Bloodshot and sightless.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Government vehicles, pulling up now.
At the edge of the parking lot.
100 yards away, give or take.

Numerous SEDANS. The two PANEL TRUCKS.

AGENTS crouch behind cars.
Weapons trained on the wounded behemoth.

EXT. GIRLS' SCHOOL - SAME TIME

The front doors BURST OUTWARD, and a limping, hunched figure emerges. One hand frantically SIGNALLING for ther chopper:

The look in TIMOTHY'S eye is murderous.

THE CHOPPER

Banks, coming in low as Timothy HAULS himself aboard. Flops on his back.

PILOT
I'll have you at a hospital ASAP, sir.

TIMOTHY
Fuck hospital... dying... just bring me around... and hold her steady...

He grabs his automatic rifle.

BACK WITH CAITLIN - UNDERNEATH THE TANKER

She adheres to Charly's motionless form.
Looking small and terrified.

Whispers in her mother's ear. Soft and low:

CAITLIN
Mommy, get up now. You just stop it, Mommy, you stop being a little baby. Stop it, you're not dead, I know you're not dead so you get up now.

Face contorted, she strikes out. Flails. HITS Charly.

CAITLIN
Don't you die, you get up now, Goddammit..! Life is pain, you just get used to it, and stand up *right this minute*, Mommy. Life is pain, do it, you bitch. *Do it.*

Tears coursing in rivulets... Little fists clenched.

It could be a trick of the wind. Tiny aspiration, not enough breath to fog a mirror...

CHARLY
...mommy... here...

A solitary tear appears in the wide-open staring eye.

One fingernail, then. Scratches feebly.
Toes, shifting... seeking purchase.

A HAND, planting itself. TEETH BARED, a rictus of pain.

Rising up... Standing.

Reaches full height and flexes one deadly arm and she has a name again, she's Colonel Charlene Baltimore.

And in this moment we know why her name is legend in the cold corridors. Charly's a sword of vengeance. She's born once every century.

She hugs her daughter and says:

CHARLY
... You're grounded...

Overhead, the HOWLING of rotor blades. Charly gasps for breath. Cracks open the GUN... no bullets. Swell.

Struggles to focus. Scans the pavement... There.

THE MP-5 machine gun lies twenty feet from her.
Twenty miles, same difference, she's in bad shape.

The temperature gauge: *305 degrees*. Charly swallows hard:

CHARLY
On three, we run for it, okay? One... Two... *Three.*

They break cover. Into the open.

A WITHERING FIRE ERUPTS

Right at their feet..! Geysers of asphalt, SHOT SKYWARD.

TIMOTHY

Sprays the blacktop from above. Ruthless.

Charly goes insane.

Lurches, crazed, to the cab of the truck. Thumbs the mike and says:

CHARLY
Somebody get that motherfucker off me! I got a kid here, I got my eight year-old daughter, *Jesus Christ..!* It's Christmas Eve, who are you *people,* fucking pull him off! Do you hear me..?

CUT TO:

EYES SNAP OPEN IN DARKNESS

We don't know whose they are.
We don't know where we are.

BACK WITH CHARLY - SAME TIME

The temperature gauge: *308 degrees.*

She clutches Caitlin. Shouting into the mic:

CHARLY
Distract him, for God's sake give me ten seconds, please, I'm begging somebody, anybody, *she's my daughter..!*

EXT. EDGE OF PARKING LOT

A sour-looking CHAPTER AGENT stands before a row of cars and the A & P panel truck. Expressionless beaurocrat.

Lifts the mic to his lips and says:

CHAPTER BEAUROCRAT
Negative, ma'am, we understand your request, but we've decided to go ahead and let this play out...

BEHIND HIM

The back of the panel truck EXPLODES.

An escape car CATAPULTS outward into space --

SMASHES DOWN atop two sedans. Blows out their windshields.

Flings itself to the pavement and RICOCHETS forward, zero to sixty.

MITCH HENESSEY

At the wheel. Making a suicide run.

Face a FRIGHT MASK of deadly purpose.
We have no idea why someone who looks like him is alive.

INT. HELICOPTER - SAME TIME

Distraction, just enough: The pilot banks toward the CAR.

TIMOTHY
Where are *you* going??

Timothy grabs the stick --

THAT'S WHEN CHARLY BREAKS COVER

Does a MAD STAGGER across the blacktop. Goes for the GUN.

TIMOTHY CHANGES DIRECTION

Chopper again, SCREAMING in low and fast --

CHARLY

Dives, rolls -- Comes up with the MACHINE GUN and falls flat on her back, points it skyward:

CHARLY
Suck on it.

She fires. Blows the chopper's TAIL ROTOR. The craft pitches to the side --

Dumps Timothy out the door.
Flailing, head over heels, he FALLS --

Lands atop the TANKER, right on the silver tank and he BURNS. Actually SIZZLES at 310 degrees Celsius, steam pouring off him like a vampire in daylight, SHRIEKING--!

CHARLY
Die screaming, motherfucker.

She watches as he slips from sight... off the tanker.

SIRENS now, approaching. Wind, biting cold. Ground black and bloody in the moonlight...

HERE COMES HENESSEY

Powers across the lot, pedal to the metal --

Followed at a distance of fifty yards by half a dozen squawling GOVERNMENT VEHICLES, flashers turning.

Henessey stomps the brake. SLEWS to a stop, tires cooking..!

KICKS open the passenger door as Charly collapses into the car, CAITLIN in her arms.

CHARLY
Might... wanna hurry... the tanker's a bomb...

HENESSEY
Terrific. What else, we got a fucking lightning rod on the roof..? No, Caitlin, *don't check*.

He PEELS OUT. Powers up from zero to seventy in whatever time it takes. Doesn't care. Not tonight.

CHARLY
Hey... you're bleeding...

HENESSEY
I think that's yours...

CHARLY
Right, sorry...

He inadvertently smacks a light pole. SPARKS fly.

CAITLIN
You're a bad driver! Who said you could drive?

HENESSEY
Jesus, don't you have to be twelve to get your monthly?

EXT. PARKING LOT - BESIDE THE TANKER - SAME TIME

They have to drag Timothy inside the car. The engine ROARS as it leaps forward, trailing the other FIVE --

Scarred and hideous, he stares after Charly, screaming:

TIMOTHY
Somebody do her, somebody kill that fucking whore, kill her!

That's when the helicopter crashes.

The pilot does everything but flap his arms -- Forget it.

IT KEELS OVER. Rotor touches pavement --

Blows to pieces. They ALL go. Snapped off. Blown like rockets in every direction.

TIMOTHY LOOKS UP

As a rotor blade whistles right through the WINDSHIELD of his car. Shears off his HEAD. Blows out the BACK in a shower of glass --

Hurtles onward, SPINNING out of control, strikes the tanker.

Boom.

Imagine God in Monte Carlo. Tossing dice the length of a craps table. Now, imagine the dice are BURNING CARS.

EXT. EDGE OF PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

Henessy flies out of the parking lot and INTO THE WOODS as the firestorm RAGES TO HEAVEN behind him.

Cars, heading his way... AIRBORNE.

Fights the wheel, swerving through the woods as all around him, FLAMING CARS crash down. BOUNCING into and out of the trees, peekaboo...

Some go flying past OVERHEAD. Striking in front like meteors, GOUGING the earth. Caitlin screams:

CAITLIN
Don't hit the cars!

Henessey favors her with a foul look.

CHARLY looks up and sees ANGELS flying overhead, trailing concrete...

EXT. BLUFF OVERLOOKING CRASH SITE

SANTA CLAUS (remember him?) lies drunk in his disabled sleigh. Mumbling to himself:

SANTA
Federal bastards. Fuckin' murdered JFK, fuckin'...

Oblivious as the SHOCKWAVE ENGULFS him. *Whoooshhh..!*

EXT. NIGHT SKY - OVERLOOKING TOWN SQUARE

Everyone watches the fireball climb. A LITTLE BOY points:

LITTLE BOY
Mom, look!

ANOTHER ANGLE

A spectacle of untoward proportion:

SANTA CLAUS HIMSELF

Along with his four horses (progress marches on) go FLYING HIGH, HIGH OVERHEAD, summoning in the holiday, hooray..!

He's DEAD, of course, there's that.

So are the horses, legs splayed, tumbling like airborne RUGS.

But hell, it's CHRISTMAS.

The assembled kids watch, eyes like SAUCERS as

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - SAME TIME

Santa and horses SPLINTER THE ROOF on their way through.

CRASHING down in a spray of plaster and brick and TWO TONS of assorted other shit, DEVASTATING a once proud living room.

Bad landing.

It takes the kids all of two seconds:

KID #1
Santa's down.

KID #2
Let's get his toys!

MEANWHILE, BACK IN HELL - DRIVING

Henessy's car bursts OUT OF THE WOODS.

Slingshots onto the highway and races forward, SAFE. Behind it, the sky is aglow, SNOWING fiery traces...

Bits of earth, trees, pavement...

OVERHEAD VIEW:

As they roar out of town, we see burning woods and a CRATER approximately 150 yards in diameter -- the St. Paul Catholic Girls' Academy no longer exists... CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE - OUTSIDE OF TOWN - NIGHTTIME

Henessey coasts to the side of the road and stops. He lays his head on the steering wheel, sucking air. Looks at Charly:

HENESSEY
Sorry, can't drive... Are you okay..?

CHARLY
(grimaces)
... Are you... stupid..?

He grins ruefully.

HENESSY
... funny thing..? You aren't going to die... I am...

Charly offers him that soft, sad little smile.

CHARLY
I know.

Henessey starts to fade... breathing labored... Reaches up... strokes Caitlin's hair. Smiles at her:

HENESSEY
Hey, gorgeous... know something... you got your mother's eyes...don't let... nobody tell you different...

Slumps back in the seat. Gazing at Charly.

HENESSEY
... Can I see... your real eyes..?

She reaches up. Slowly removes the emerald green contact lenses. Reveals for him Samantha's soft brown eyes.

He smiles... as she leans down... kisses him on the forehead. A single tear runs from one bloodshot eye. He whispers:

HENESSEY
Scared... to be nobody... without a ripple... please... remember me...
(beat)
... Love you...

Dies.

Charly leans her head on the dash. Cries for awhile. For Henessey... For herself... For this Godawful planet and everything else. DISSOLVE TO:

ESTABLISHING - SMALL FARMHOUSE - NIGHTTIME

Faded clapboard house. Overshadowed by a towering elm.

INT. HOUSE - SAME TIME

Inside. A bedroom. A Winnie the Pooh nightlight. A MOTHER SITS next to her sleeping daughter's bed.

The shot from the beginning of the film.

An elderly FARMER pokes his head in, says:

DOCTOR
Ma'am...? Ambulance is here. They'll be right in.

The shadowy figure nods. Remains seated.

Stays awhile in the dark. Keeping vigil.
Snow slithers against the glass.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PALATIAL GEORGETOWN ESTATE - EARLY MORNING

MR. PERKINS emerges from a guest cottage, flanked by his ubiquitous AIDE. They proceed down a flagstone path.

AIDE
...and as long as the President remains on the fence, we'll possess a degree of plausible deniability, which is no small miracle, considering. With luck, the storm may pass us by.

The aide's FOOT comes down on a circular slab of STONE -- and a voice from the grave says:

VOICE (O.S.)
Stay very still.

Stops him in his tracks, stops him dead as

CHARLY BALTIMORE

Steps from the nearby trees. Stands, twenty yards downrange. Beretta leveled at both of them.

Two months, you barely notice the limp. She stands there in sleeveless top and short skirt and looks like a million.

Thumbs a a metal box, click-! A red ARMING LIGHT blinks on.

CHARLY
Good morning, I'm Charly. The slab you're standing on is actually a land mine, what's known as a bouncing betty. Keep your foot on the pressure plate, nothing happens. Step off the stone, we'll all be wearing you.

PERKINS steps forward. The gun shifts. Targets him.

PERKINS
Whoa. Everyone relax. Charly, I know we've treated you poorly, please, it was business, it's the game, you know that. Stop this. I'll guarantee your passage to Canada, you'll be totally safe --

CHARLY
Will I be safe as a bug in a rug?

He stops talking. Stares at her, mouth open.

CHARLY
That was the phrase that keyed it.

She chews her lower lip, thoughts drifting.

CHARLY
Yeah. See, I remember my father... remember him hiding in my closet at night... remember nine years old, waiting for the creak of that closet door... But it was only when Caitlin mentioned how *you'd* used the phrase... that I remembered where I must have picked it up. Remembered how, when I was only four fucking years old, my father would bring a *friend* over... A friend who'd carry me into another room in the dark and after, he'd tuck me in and that's what he would say, every time... this good friend of my father's.

PERKINS
(flustered)
Charly, that was decades ago, you're not remembering correctly --

CHARLY
Remember the velveteen rabbit you gave me one Christmas? It's all clear now. Beautiful red bow on its neck, all shiny... You sent it to the house and it was everything I wanted, that rabbit... but I paid for it, didn't I, Mr. Perkins..? Yessir. Just like at Chapter, I was paid for services rendered. Prettiest thing I'd ever seen... but it came with strings attached, didn't it..? It was *a rabbit made of string*, wasn't it, Mr. Perkins..?
(beat)
My poor, drunken mother, bullshit, my mother was *gone* by then... but to suppress you, I altered those early memories. Subtracted you. Replaced you with a sad, well-meaning old woman...

PERKINS
Charly, I... I didn't want to, please understand... your father, it was his idea --

CHARLY
No it wasn't, not until later. Want a shovel? Your grave's nearly deep enough.

She reaches in a pocket. Tosses him a cellular phone -- He catches it as though it were a live snake.

CHARLY
My terms are these. Call State and order full disclosure on your personal correspondance, December 1-25th. Copy all level 3 employees. Then disband Chapter, effective immediately. In exchange..? I won't shoot you, and I won't make you stand on that mine. I won't touch you. I promise.

PERKINS
You... you promise.

He swallows hard. Looks to his aide... back to her... DIALS.

Charly takes a deep breath. Scans the flowers, face placid. It's really quite lovely today. Maybe she'll start a garden.

Perkins clicks off. Looks at Charly:

PERKINS
It's done. Now, you promise... you won't shoot me... won't make me get on the mine..?

CHARLY
I promise.

She smiles. Shifts her aim and shoots the other guy.

Perkins' eyes WIDEN in sudden realization. He LUNGES forward, grabs the aide, holding him up... desperately propping his dead weight atop the land mine...

PERKINS
Goddamn you, I can't hold him... You bitch... YOU FUCKING BITCH..!

EXT. GEORGETOWN AVENUE - DAYTIME

Henessey's CHRYSLER CONVERTIBLE has been restored to a cherry red. It purrs along the boulevard, Charly at the wheel. Hair blowing. She talks on the cellular phone:

CHARLY
Yes, Mr. President, you have my assurance that Perkins' latest operation has been rendered beyond salvage.

Behind her a GOUT OF EARTH blows skyward. Showers the road a ways back.

CHARLY
He's not in the greatest shape either.

INTERCUT - PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

He speaks from the oval office, face grave:

PRESIDENT
We all owe you an astounding debt of thanks, Colonel. Positively mortifying what goes on under a president's nose, don't you think?

CHARLY
Yes, sir. Perhaps you'll see to it that it doesn't recur.

PRESIDENT
Of course. Would it be impertinent to ask if you'd consider working for State again? The moneys involved would be substantial.

CHARLY
Out of the question. I've got a stack of papers to grade. What it is, I have a husband now, sir, I'm too old for the trade. I want you to know, however, that you have made the correct decision.

PRESIDENT
Which is?

CHARLY
Not to fuck with me.
(beat)
Oh, yeah. Before I go, I'm gonna need a small favor...

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - AKRON, OHIO - DAY

Henessey's EX-WIFE stands in the open doorway, flanked by her son TODD. Two uniformed COPS speak solemnly:

UNIFORM COP #1
... As I say, we can only apologize for the system, Ma'am, but it's confirmed that your husband is innocent of the crime for which he was imprisoned. This is a photograph of the actual criminal...

He shows her a mug shot of TIMOTHY.

UNIFORM COP #1
... A petty thief named Timothy Mallick, now deceased. I'll respect your wishes should you choose to file charges against the State Attorney ...

The eyes of a ten year-old boy: A door swings open on a dusty, forgotten room... in it sits a strong, smiling father, waiting patiently for his son to return to him. DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - EDGE OF WHEATFIELD - TWILIGHT

Caitlin is in the yard, chasing a big floppy-eared Labrador.

Giggling as fireflies appear in the waning light.

On the porch, CHARLY finishes eating and puts down her fork. Gazes out over the distant highway.

Sun, passing into mystery. Wheat-field, rippling. Across the porch, a CRICKET chirps.

HAL sits beside her in the last light. Sighs:

HAL
She's gonna need the full braces. Even with your teaching, this one's gonna be rough. I don't know what to do.

Pause. Charly says nothing.

The dog parades up to Caitlin with a stick in its jaws. A farm truck goes by, a faraway speck.

Charly absent-mindedly rolls a steak knife in her fingers. Eyes far away.

It never occurs to her what she's done until the chirping stops.

Ten feet away, the knife quivers.

FADE OUT. ROLL END CREDITS.

THE END

of THE LONG KISS GOODNIGHT

Look for Charly Baltimore in:

THE KISS AFTER LIGHTNING